



# *Studies Green and Gray*

By  
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To

SIR EDMUND GOSSE, C.B.

My dear Gosse,

I offer you this little book in grateful commemoration of long kindness and fellowship. It would obviously be incorrect to say that you have "grown old" along with me: but we have at any rate spent many of our later years together in the service of art, and you will sympathize with my one difficulty in tidying up (as Conrad used to call it) these relics of my past. When I came to look them over, they seemed to me a rather heterogeneous collection: yet I still recognized them all for my own. How was I to bring them into line? To select would be unscientific, to revise would be artistically immoral. No better plan occurred to me than to print them as they were, but with a division into earlier and later, to accord with a certain difference of style and outlook. It is generally agreed that man's life is (with some happy exceptions) divided into the periods of Youth and Age: these two have even been personified, and supposed to hold opposite views on many matters of importance. Scott says that he was once tempted to be angry with "the officious zeal which supposes that its green conceptions can instruct my gray hairs." The antagonism is still more troublesome when it is our own gray hairs which make us frown upon our



*own green conceptions. Perhaps the author's case is not often so hard as that he has become accustomed to finding himself not altogether one nor always harmonious. But he may still be anxious about his chances of securing an audience. It is a discouraging thought that those who can accept him in one of his phases are likely enough to reject him in the other. There is only one refuge for him—to set his hopes on those of his possible friends who are neither old nor young, and better still on those who have succeeded in being both at once. It is for this as well as for the other good reason that I offer my book to you*

Yours,

HENRY NEWBOLT.

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## NOTE

OF the papers collected in this volume five appeared originally in the *Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*, four in the *Monthly Review*, one in the *Quarterly Review*, one in the *Edinburgh Review*. Special thanks are also due to Messrs. Blackie and Co for leave to reprint the note on *The Ingoldsby Legends*, and to Messrs Sampson Low, Marston, and Co for the paper here called "The Most Famous Ship," which forms part of their edition of Raleigh's *Last Fight of the "Revenge,"* and is there adorned with drawings by Mr. Frank Brangwyn, R A.

## PART I



# STUDIES GREEN AND GRAY

## I. THE ROMANCE OF A SONG BOOK

### I

MID-OCTOBER in the year of our Lord 1388 had been wild and rainy over the South of France, but afterwards the weather changed suddenly, bridges were mended, roads became once more hard enough for pack-work. On a bright morning near the end of the month two travellers on horseback left the town of Morlens, followed by a small train of servants, who kept respectfully at some little distance in the rear. Of the leaders, one was a knight about the age of fifty-five years—by his figure and bearing a valiant and an expert man-of-arms, by his face a man of the world, genial, weighty, and sure of himself. His companion, some five years younger, half friend, half follower, would ride no nearer than his shoulder till a word or question brought him quickly abreast for a mile or two. a courtier, it might be seen, who knew, and had always known, his place and time.

The party travelled fast, for this was their final stage.

They dined at Montgeberel, and rode through the afternoon without stopping, except once, at Ercie, for a drink. The sun was setting as they came clattering into Orthès and parted company, with some little ceremony on the one hand and blunt good-humour on the other. Sir Espaing du Lyon alighted at his own lodging, and shortly afterwards betook himself to the Castle, where he found his lord, Gaston Phœbus, Count of Foix, in his gallery, and delivered to him a welcome message. That done, he disappeared into oblivion, from which this journey alone of all his deeds and duties has called back for one bright hour his name and personality.

His companion, Messire Jean Froissart, in England called Sir John, had put up at the sign of the "Moon," a house kept by a squire of the Count's, there he awaited the summons upon which he confidently reckoned, for the Count was the lord of all the world that most desired to speak with strangers, to hear tidings; and Sir Espaing would by this have told him that the stranger of to-day was no chance comer, and brought no ordinary gossip of the marches.

It was not long before the summons came, and was obeyed with diligence, for though the Count's royalty was but small game to one bred near the majesty of England, yet none more rejoiced in deeds of arms than he did; there was seen in his hall, chamber, and court, knights and squires of honour going up and down and talking of arms and of love; all manner of tidings and every realm and country might there be heard; and he was himself large and courteous in gifts, and suffered that none should depart from him without some token from the coffers which stood ready in his chamber. He was, in short, reputed an ideal patron for a poor but diligent

historian and rhymers. Froissart hoped for a prolonged visit at free quarters, and had come prepared to make himself agreeable.

He was received in the gallery by the Count, who was in good humour, having dined but a little before, according to the superb custom by which he almost turned night into day and day into night, rising at noon and beginning the evening with a supper at midnight. Froissart, who never forgot that he had seen in his time many knights, kings, princes, and others of the sort, was immediately of opinion that he had never seen any like him of personage, nor of so fair form, nor so well made, his visage fair, sanguine, and smiling; his eyes grey and kind. The Count, moreover, at once fulfilled all his hopes, made him good cheer, and retained him as of his house: a grandly indefinite invitation which included stabling and keep for his horse, and eventually ran to twelve weeks' entertainment, to say nothing of a Christmas dinner, shared with four bishops, five abbots, and a host of knights and viscounts. This was the right kind of master. "In everything," wrote Froissart afterwards, "he was so perfect that he cannot be praised too much."

Looked at from the other end of five centuries, he seems to us something less angelic: choleric certainly, and cruel; hated by his wife; the murderer of his only son. But he was a patron of the arts, he had pleasure in harmony of instruments (he could do it right well himself), he would have songs sung before him, and he admired not only poetry but those who wrote it—a liberality rare at all times. Froissart was right in going to his presentation with a book of verses in his hand.

In the service even of the great there must be give as



well as take ; and after some days of sight-seeing, making acquaintance, and nosing out of scandalous and superstitious tales, the new courtier entered upon the duties of his position. Every night at midnight, wet, windy, or fine, November, December, or January, he must rouse himself to leave the " Moon " and plod up to the Castle. A painful business he found it, but almost repaid by the luxury of the change from mud and cold outside to splendour and stir within. The Count loved light ; his great hall blazed with fire and torches, the poet compared it to a terrestrial paradise. There for the remainder of the three months he read aloud to his patron every night after supper : and while he read there was none durst speak any word, because the Count wished the reading to be well understood, and he took therein great solace. Only himself, when it came to any matter of question, would speak to the reader, and that he did most courteously, not in Gascon, but in good and fair French. It may be that the strict silence was more pleasing to the poet than to the knights and squires who made up his audience ; but they too were of the South, and in all likelihood fond enough of stories and of songs : in any case, they could but honour the man to whom they heard the great Count himself say, when the reading ended, " 'Tis a fair calling, fair master, to make such things as that." Then he would rise for bed, and, after drinking a nightcap, call to the poet, and order a cup to be poured for him too of his own wine from the gold flagon. After that a formal good-night to all, and away he went with the torches, while Froissart stumbled down again to his chamber at the " Moon," warmer now, and well enough content. For the present, at any rate, he was in the world he loved, and was spending

his time in revel and in peace. And this, as well as the eighty florins of Arragon, fine metal and good weight, that he received from the magnificent Gaston Phœbus as a parting gift, he owed to the book which he had brought with him.

## II

We will follow this book further, for when Froissart rode with it from Orthès a long and romantic history lay before it, and in the twenty generations of men that it has outlasted it has been the possession of very few, the regret of many, and at last the treasure trove of one

It was called *Méhador*, being the history of a knight so named, and was made at the request of Wenceslas of Bohemia, Duke of Luxembourg and Brabant, and in it were incorporated all the chansons, ballades, rondeaulx, and virelais, to the number of seventy-nine, which the gentle Duke made in his time. So much has been known and remembered from the first, and since that amorous, gracious, and chivalrous Prince Wenceslas (may his soul be in Paradise) died in 1383, the book in its present form is, at least, no later than that year; Froissart's share is some fifteen years earlier.

In January 1389 it travelled safely (with the florins) from Orthès to Avignon, and no doubt farther. In 1393 Duke Louis of Orleans, being with Charles VI. at Abbeville, bought from Froissart for twenty francs of gold a copy of another book, *Le Dit Royal*, probably at the same time, or soon after, he also bought *Méhador*; at any rate it figured in the inventory of his son Duke Charles in 1417 as *Le Livre de Melhador, couvert de*

*veloux vert, à deux fermoers samblanz d'argent dorés, esmaillés aux armes de Monseigneur.*

In the same Duke's inventory for 1436 it is again described. In 1440 it was still in the library ; but thereafter it is gone ; for three hundred and fifty years it wandered no man knows where or why.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century it reappeared, but was unrecognized , small wonder, for it was shorn of all its outward splendour ; green velvet, silver gilt clasps, and enamelled arms were gone, and the royal volume shivered in the Bibliothèque Nationale without even a title or a fly-leaf to protect its naked first folio. The librarian handed it to the binder, who dressed it in decent calf, like a book of the lower middle class, and stamped it with the arms of the Corsican adventurer. For title he gave it the words *Roman du Roy Artus*, but this being obviously absurd, it was catalogued under the names of two of the principal characters, as *Roman de Camel et d'Hermondine*, and, spellbound by this fatal sentence, lay in concealment for another ninety years.

Deliverance was, of course, to come at last, or there would have been no fairy tale to tell , but it was to be accomplished only by the age-long wanderings and cruel sufferings of the elder half-brother, the *Méiador* of 1365. This was Froissart's own work, the first version, without the songs of Wenceslas. How and when it was launched upon the world we have no means of knowing , but in the first half of the seventeenth century it was old and no longer honoured. Somewhere in Burgundy—perhaps at Sémur—it fell into the power of a binder, a dealer in what was then a black art, for by it one book was commonly sacrificed to prolong and beautify the lives of others. This wicked magician tore his noble

victim in pieces, but in so doing unwittingly aided the meeting he seemed to hinder. With four of the great vellum leaves he bound a couple of common registers, the records for the years 1628-29 and 1643-49, of the manorial court of Cloux, a seigneurie in the parish of Genay. With this *noblesse de robe* the elder *Méliador* had to be content for some two hundred years. At the time of the Revolution these registers were in the Hôtel de Coigny, where they were seized among the papers of the Duc de Coigny, and on the thirteenth day of Messidor in the year II. they were deposited among the national archives, to wait with the patience of the immortals for another hundred years. In 1891 they were discovered and published, and now the counter-spell was in the hands that were to bring the younger *Méliador* back to the world which had believed him lost for ever. For these four fragmentary leaves, still for the most part legible, contained not only the title *Méliador*, but the two names of Camel and Hermondine, under which the book's identity lay buried in the catalogue of the Bibliothèque Nationale as completely as Merlin under his thorn-tree in Brocelande. By this clue, in October 1893, M. Auguste Longnon at last discovered the song book of Duke Wenceslas, and the younger *Méliador* was united after more than five hundred years to all that remained of his elder brother. By 1899 both were published in Paris by the Société des Anciens Textes français, and so passed finally from the mortal perils of manuscript into the Valhalla of the Printed Books Department.



but never unexpected, it is interesting to the dreamer, but very futile and tedious to hear when once day has brought back the life of thought and action. It must have its own place and time, or it is nothing the reader must sit, as they sat after supper at Orthès, idle and satisfied, by a winter fireside ; there he may watch, in the uncertain blaze and shadow, the conventional challenges and unimpassioned loves of these phantom knights and damsels in their subfusc world, as they seem to move now and then upon the arras of the mind, but always without advancing or changing so much as a gesture. Saigremor and Seville, Phenonée and Agamanor, Méliador, Camel, Hermondine, Florée the daughter of Los, Tangis le Norois and the lady of Valerne—they are for ever riding up and down a country full of enormous castles, with woolly hounds chasing woolly deer across the middle distance ; a land where Stirling and Bristol are as real as Logres and Camaalot : where you pass direct from Northumberland to South Wales by land, or by sea from the Isle of Man to Aberdeen ; where Tarbonne is a city of Cornwall on the Severn, and Chepstow Castle is founded—and named Montrose—by Julius Cæsar. Into this dream we may enter if we will, as Gaston Phœbus did, but only upon the same conditions : that is, we must ourselves provide the firelight, the silence, and the wine.

There remain the songs, the *rondeaulx* and ballades of Wenceslas : and of them there is more to be said. M. Longnon and an English critic have proclaimed them wanting in merit : a rather irrelevant opinion, for songs may be more sincere in proportion as they are less masterly : also, these are of the fourteenth century, and the work of one whose life was full of strong emotions,

and characteristic of an age supposed to be now as dead as Nineveh. I have looked in vain for the story of this life in English : the outline of it would run, perhaps, after this fashion.

John, Duke of Brabant, third of the name, was a great lord with a small but rich lordship : he was a grandson of Edward I of England, and his wife a granddaughter of Philip the Bold of France. But when his three sons had died in youth, he grew weary of courts, took the habit of the order of St. Bernard, and died the same year, being the year 1355 of our salvation. To two of his daughters, the Countesses of Flanders and of Gueldres, he left more money than he could well give ; to the eldest, Jeanne, the Duchy of Brabant. In the same year Jeanne was married to young Wenceslas of Bohemia, Duke of Luxembourg, brother of the Emperor Charles IV., and her own second cousin : for he was son to the blind hero, John, King of Bohemia, who died in the last charge at Cressy.

Their strong and lasting affection, their hospitality and love of the arts, were the happy elements in what was in all other ways a troubled life. In the twenty-eight years of his reign Wenceslas had very few of peace : he fought in turn with his brother-in-law of Flanders, with Peter Couterel, the demagogue of Louvain ; with Edward of Gueldres, who had imprisoned and robbed his own brother Renaud ; with the brigands called Linfars, who spread their nets between Meuse and Rhine ; with that treacherous ally the Duke of Juliers, who encouraged the Linfars in secret and then backed Edward of Gueldres openly ; and lastly, once more with the burgers of Louvain, who made head against feudalism with ferocious and unscrupulous courage. But between

his marches, battles, sieges, flights, and restorations, he showed always an unbroken and liberal gaiety: by common consent he gave the best dinners and tournaments in the Low Countries, and it is significant that the sixteen years during which his munificence supported Froissart were devoted by the latter to poetry, apparently at his request.

In 1383, when he was only forty-six, the end came upon him suddenly. "The Duke being returned to Brussels, after that he had some while taken pleasure in games, in jousting, in hunting, in playing at fives, wherein they say he had great mastery, and in devising pastimes, he journeyed to Luxembourg, where in short space he died. He is buried in the monastery of Oryval, the which had been by him aforetime builded and endowed with yearly revenues." They brought the news to the Duchess Jeanne at Brussels; "and as she had greatly loved him in his life, so also long time she wept him after his death: and if she had not perceived that the country had need of her and of her dealing, her mourning had longer endured, seeing that the wound was deep."

In the life of this little-known prince the memorable points for us are his championship of the oppressed Countess of Gueldres, his endless wars, his chivalrous love of his wife, and his frequent separation from her, particularly after the battle of Bastweiler in 1371, when he remained ten months in captivity. The effect upon his poetry is, I think, recognizable. The songs in *Mélador* vary in merit; some are thinner than others, some more cramped by the highly technical rules of their age, but they are singularly, almost monotonously, uniform in tone. There are no albas or dirges among



them ; they are songs of separation, of patient longing, of faithful hope. I have chosen for translation the three which follow, not because they are especially representative, but because they offer more chance than others of keeping fairly near to the original. It must be remembered that there are many among them longer and more elaborate, and that they belong to a time when songs were written to be sung.

## RONDEL

“ Though I wander far-off ways,  
Dearest, never doubt thou me :

Mine is not the love that strays,  
Though I wander far-off ways :

Faithfully for all my days  
I have vowed myself to thee ;  
Though I wander far-off ways,  
Dearest, never doubt thou me.”

The second is an example of a slightly different form, one of the variations from the original type, of which several were used by Wenceslas, but not, so far as I know, continued by his successors.

## RONDEL

“ Long ago to thee I gave  
Body, soul, and all I have,  
Nothing in the world I keep :

All that in return I crave  
Is that thou accept the slave  
Long ago to thee I gave—  
Body, soul, and all I have :

Had I more to share or save  
I would give as give the brave,  
    Stooping not to part the heap ;  
Long ago to thee I gave  
Body, soul, and all I have,  
    Nothing in the world I keep."

The third follows an older and simpler form of the well-known ballade type : this, too, is, I believe, rare ; in our own language I have found no example of it The theme is, perhaps, the most conventional in the whole book.

#### BALLADE

" I cannot tell, of twain beneath this bond,  
Which one in grief the other went beyond,  
Narcissus, who, to end the pain he bore,  
Died of the love that could not help him more,  
Or I, that pine because I cannot see  
The lady who is queen and love to me

Nay—for Narcissus, in the forest pond  
Seeing his image, made entreaty fond,  
' Belovèd, comfort on my longing pour  
So for awhile he soothed his passion sore :  
So cannot I, for all too far is she—  
The lady who is queen and love to me.

But since that I have Love's true colours donned  
I in his service will not now despond,  
For in extremes Love yet can all restore ;  
So till her beauty walks the world no more,  
All day remembered in my hope shall be  
The lady who is queen and love to me."

\*These are not verse of high pretensions ; if any one thinks it worth while to decry them by a comparison

with the work of Charles of Orleans, of Villon, of our own Swinburnes, Langs, and Dobsons, I have no quarrel with him ; but he is looking at them from a different point of view. The thoughts and customs of our forefathers, however antiquated or unpractical they may seem, were at any rate the thoughts and customs of living men, without whose life we had not been ; and anything which can help us to look, and still more to enter, into that life, even in a dream, is for me a talisman and a treasure when it can be found. I have tried to show how these old songs, however thin, may be said to have about them the charm of things recovered beyond hope, the magic of a ghostly secret, the faint music of the drowned bells of *Caer-Is* : for they belong to a past that has sunk below very deep waters. Whether they are something more than relics of an early civilization, whether with these a knight of the Middle Age unlocked his heart, it is perhaps impossible to say ; it would be pleasant to fancy that they do retain, not only the fashion of the time, but some outline or impression of a personal temperament, formed in what is to us a half alien but never quite forgotten order of the world.

## 2. CAMDEN'S ELIZABETH

THE Elizabethan age deserved better of History than to be left for the digging-ground of a laborious posterity: to lie buried and deserted till the scientific should restore its ruins and label its treasures for the cold museum. It was but fitting that a story so hot with life, so charged with the very blood of valour and passion, so lit with the momentary colours of romance, should be told by one who had, at least in spirit and at the self-same time, ventured with the adventurous, protested with the protestant, triumphed with the admirals, and worshipped with all his fellow-countrymen at the feet of that strange Protean Divinity whose name was *Semper Eadem*

The man was not wanting to the occasion: he was a famous Englishman, and his annals worthy of the years they chronicled: but he wrote in Latin. Something, no doubt, was gained by this—a processional solemnity, an epic dignity, a senatorial brevity and weight of phrase, such as can be looked for only from the most sonorous and humane of languages. But something, too, was lost: while Camden and his work stood most excellently for the high-heartedness, the learning, and the judgment of his country, he would have failed perhaps to represent by himself one more, and not the least distinctive, of the qualities that she was then displaying. This was a spirit of exuberance, a daring

whether of mind or body too fantastic and unmeasured to be called by the stern name of courage. a kind of splendid recklessness, an unappeasable extravagance of youth, such as will start for Eldorado in a cockboat and end in the last fight of the *Revenge*. Perilous seas of language as well as of salt water this spirit traversed, and brought back monstrous and luxuriant fruits, of kinds no longer used among us. But the meat and drink of our fathers must always be at least curious to us, and in Camden's book, as Darcie translated it (fetching a compass by way of the French), we may taste the very fire and flavour of that heady vintage.

Let us first take some account of these two men, and then pass on to consider the age of Elizabeth as we see it through their eyes

## I

William Camden, schoolmaster, antiquary, herald, and historian, was of Midland origin, the son of a Lichfield painter who had migrated to London with his wife Elizabeth, daughter to a man of old family, Giles Curwen of Poulton Hall in Lancashire. As for his education, there is a story of his being first entered at Christ's Hospital; but however that may be, it is certain that in 1566 he was leaving St. Paul's School for Oxford, being then some fifteen years of age. At Oxford he was well befriended. Dr. Thomas Cooper placed him in Magdalen Choir School; Dr. Thomas Thornton invited him thence to enter his own community of Broadgates Hall (re-founded half a century later by the name of Pembroke College), and when Thornton himself left this in three years' time for a

canonry at Christ Church, he carried Camden with him across St Aldate's, and continued to support him after the generous fashion which, with poverty and celibacy, has long become obsolete in English seats of learning.

In the story of these Oxford years there is one point of importance and more than one of interest. The first is that on standing for a fellowship at All Souls' Camden was decisively rejected, and thereupon, abandoning hope of a career in the University, decided to launch upon wider waters. He owed this check to the papists, against whom he had already declared strongly: his history, therefore, is to be estimated as the work of a man who in the triumph of England and Protestantism has himself too seen his desire upon his enemies. Judged in this light the inclination of his bias is seen to be natural, the moderation of his tone most commendable. Again, from the shadowy crowd of his contemporaries at Oxford a few notable figures stand out: at Broadgates there were two especially, with West Country pedigree and antiquarian bent most fortunately suited to his own tastes. These were Richard Carew of Anthony and his distant kinsman George: of whom Richard was afterwards the historian of his native Cornwall, while George, a Devon man, rose to be Lord Carew of Clopton and Earl of Totnes. He had a stirring career as a soldier and Governor in Ireland; he was Lieutenant-General of the Ordnance in England, sailed with Essex to Cadiz and the Azores, and went the French Embassy with Sir Robert Cecil. Later, he supplied Camden with copious notes for the Irish history of his own time, and was appointed, four days after the death of Elizabeth, to wait on King James and instruct him in the state of public affairs. He died in

1629 and lies among his wife's family, the Cloptons of Clopton, in the north aisle of Stratford-on-Avon Church, beneath an armorial tomb familiar to all heralds, and worthy of Camden himself.

But even the lions and coronets of Carew, with all the glory of the West upon them, fade before the splendour of another name which Christ Church links with that of Camden. Among his fellow-students under Thornton was Philip Sidney. Though three years younger than Camden it would be folly to doubt that he was a congenial and inspiring companion, remembering what Fulke Greville said of him : " Though I lived with him and knew him from a child, I never knew him other than a man ; with such staidness of mind, lovely and familiar gravity, as carried grace and reverence above greater years ; his talk ever of knowledge, and his very play tending to enrich his mind ", remembering, too, that he left Oxford, after three years, the most finished gentleman of his age, about the same time that Camden was first supplicating for his bachelor's degree. We have Camden's own word for it that his fellow-student encouraged him in his antiquarian labours, and in the passage in the *Annals* which relates to the fatal affair at Zutphen he speaks of Sidney in a tone of personal admiration and regard which is rare in his terse judicial pages. Setting aside his eulogies of Mary Queen of Scots, mother of the sovereign under whom he wrote, and of Burghley who had steered England and Elizabeth through forty years of storm-tossed glory, there are but seven in his book whom he seems to praise with conviction : Sir John Norris, one " amongst the greatest Captains of our Nation in this age " ; Stapleton and Cosins, profound Doctors of Divinity and Law, who

"no ways fell short for real Worth of the great Name and Repute they have in the World"; Edmund Spenser, who "surpassed all the English poets of former times, not excepting Chaucer himself"; Nicholas Wotton, nine times ambassador, "a man of noble birth, but far more noble and famous at home and abroad for his wisdom"; Richard Hooker, "born in Devonshire, a country fruitful of noble Wits," and a Divine worthy of imitation for his learning and many virtues; and Philip Sidney, the "noble soldier," the "much lamented of all good men." Camden, after telling of his magnificent obsequies and funeral duties in the Church of St. Paul at London, concludes with these words. "And to speake truth, the vertue of this man, his natural magnificent bounty, his adorned literature, and his sweet and milde behaviour, well deserved all this, yea, and more."

Sidney had not long left Oxford for the court of France when Camden too went down and began his London life. After four years of complete obscurity he obtained, by the kind offices of Dean Goodman of Westminster, the place of second master in Westminster School: and this he held from 1575 to 1593, when he succeeded Dr. Edward Grant as headmaster. His vacations he spent in travel, as schoolmasters have often done; and no doubt every spare day was used for his collections. But of the seed-time and early shoots of a great work and a spreading reputation there is seldom much recorded: it is beneath ground at first, then hidden among undergrowth of meaner destiny. For ten years we know little of Camden. In 1577 he met with Abraham Ortelius, "*universæ geographiæ vindex*," who urged him to begin the writing of a great



topographical study of England. In the following year he visited Norfolk and Suffolk : he was again in Suffolk and in Yorkshire and Lancashire four years later. By 1581 he had made acquaintance with Brisson, the French jurist, and was becoming known upon the Continent. At last, in 1586, his *Britannia* was published, with a dedication to William Cecil, Lord Burghley. It was immediately successful, and passed through three editions in four years. Meanwhile, in the June of 1589, Camden made a journey to North Devon, Dr Piers, Bishop of Salisbury, having appointed him, though a layman, prebend of Ilfracombe. In 1590 he travelled through Wales with another patron, one of the Goodmans. In 1594, being now headmaster of Westminster, he brought out a fourth edition of the *Britannia*, again revised and this time enlarged by the addition of a considerable amount of genealogical matter. The work now treated in all of some two hundred and fifty noble families, and might to a jealous mind seem to be near trenching upon the office of the professional herald, while to a friendly judgment it would appear as a proof of fitness for any such position. It is not surprising, then, to find, on the one hand, that Camden was appointed in 1597 to be Richmond Herald and (on the following day) Clarenceux King of Arms ; on the other hand, that his appointment was followed by a public attack from Brooke, York Herald, in a *Discoverie of certain Errours*, published in 1599, but probably written earlier. To this Camden replied in the fifth edition of the *Britannia*, which appeared in 1600. In the same year he surveyed the northern counties in the company of his friend Mr. Cotton, afterwards Sir Robert Cotton, and also published an account of the monumental

inscriptions in Westminster Abbey. In 1603 he edited a volume of Chronicles, and in 1605 published with great success his *Remains*, or notes and collections made for the purpose of writing the *Britannia*.

Two years later he was meditating a history of England, but a fall from his horse and the nine months of illness which followed seem to have cut down so vast an ambition. In 1608, however, a suggestion of Lord Burghley's, made eleven years before, struck root in his mind, and he began to write an account of Elizabeth's reign in the form of annals. The first three books appeared in 1615. they form, as it were, a complete epic, ending with the defeat of the Armada, and presenting the great Queen at the height of her fame and splendour, surrounded by the lesser but more brilliant stars that bore her company. The fourth book, published after two years' interval, concludes the reign in a sadder key: the mortal moon begins to enter the shadow of her eclipse, the stars pass downward to their setting, or fall from the zenith into darkness, the air is heavy with coming storm and gusty with sudden passions and panics. *Semper Eadem* is no longer what she was: one by one even her great seamen fail and perish: her courtiers turn ungrateful and tire of her long government: once more she becomes the aim of Spanish plotters and sedition-mongers at home. The trial in 1591 of Sir John Perrot (reputed by some to be the Queen's half-brother) ushers in twelve years of intolerable strain. A letter of Camden's, written in 1596, throws a light upon this period which is the more lurid because the troubles described in it seem to have been omitted from the *Annals* as of a kind too common and too indecisive to be worthy of mention:

" Pardon me, my good Mr Cotton, if I do not now preface it. I know you are, as we all here have been, in melancholy and pensive cogitations This *ἀννία*, or sleepless indisposition of her Majesty is now ceased which being joined with an inflammation from the Breast upward, and her mind altogether averted from Physick, in this her climacterical year, did more than terrify us all, especially the last Friday in the morning. which moved the Lords of the Council, when they had providently caused all the vagrants hereabouts to be taken up and shipped for the Low Countries, to draw some munition to the Court, and the great Horses<sup>1</sup> from Reading to guard the receipt at Westminster, to take order for the Navy to lie in the Narrow Seas, and to commit some Gentlemen hunger-starved for innovations, as Sir Edward Bainham, Catesby, Tresham, two Wrights, etc., and afterward the Count Arundel of Warder, to a Gentleman's House, for speeches used by the foresaid turbulent spirits as concerning him, or for that he made lately some provision of armour This I thought good in generality to import unto you, that you, as we do, may put away fear and thank God for this joyful recovery of Her, upon whose health and safety we all depend. *Vale præpropere xv. Martii* —Your Worship's assured, GUIL. CAMDEN."

The unfortunate Arundel of Wardour, a mere Count of the Holy Roman Empire and but lately returned from war against the Turk, was probably quite guiltless of aspiring to a crown to which he had no reasonable shadow of claim; but he was the grandson of Margaret Howard, sister to the fifth Queen of Henry the Eighth, and first cousin to Elizabeth's own mother. Even such offshoots were better lopped or topped, in the judgment of quiet men: Camden, in recording the execution of Lea in 1601 upon slender evidence of treason, adds that it was "a safe and seasonable piece of severity, as the Times were."

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.* the Household Cavalry.

These days of danger and suspense must have seemed like a bad dream to the genial old man who wrote of them under the settled government of James, when life was passing for a time from the heroic to the comic mood. He had now a house of his own at Chislehurst, and spent his time in retirement. In 1621 he twice reappeared, to take his place in ceremonial as king-of-arms : once at the creation of Francis Bacon as Viscount St Albans, and once at the degradation of Sir Francis Mitchell. In this year, too, he founded a professorship of History at Oxford. In October 1623 he vacated the office of Clarenceux, and in November, after repeated strokes of paralysis, he died, and was buried in the south transept of Westminster Abbey.

There is no doubt of his personal charm or of the worth of his character. He was of a sprightly habit of body, neither short nor tall, and comely of face. His modesty prevented him from accepting the honour of knighthood which was his due : his moderation in all things was remarkable, but with this exception, that he could set no bounds to his appetite for work, and could never leave hold of a purpose once entertained. His natural kindness showed itself in his behaviour to enemies as well as friends : he could praise wholeheartedly even Stapleton the papist, and live upon genial terms even with Brooke, his jealous subordinate. He was a sincere and unflagging follower of the faith of Christ, and a true son of the Church of England, equally innocent of Papal superstition and of Puritanical factiousness. His reputation abroad is proved by the eulogies of Ortelius, Lipsius, Scaliger, Casaubon, Merula, Mercator, and de Thou, the list of his intimate friends in England includes Sir Robert Cotton, Sir Henry

Savile, Sir Henry Wotton, Archbishop Ussher, and John Selden; among his many distinguished pupils were Ben Jonson, Dr. Fell, Dean of Christ Church, a host of bishops, William Dakins of Trinity, one of the translators of the Bible, and William Alabaster, "the rarest poet and Grecian that any one age hath produced," who in the true Elizabethan fashion first brought out the successful Latin tragedy of *Roxana* at Cambridge, and then sailed as chaplain to Essex on the Cadiz expedition.

In short, William Camden's life through a full period of years was both honourable and honoured—he was representative of much that was best, and of nothing that was evil, in a brilliant age: in his own work he was unrivalled, and he left behind him a lasting reputation.

## II

Of Abraham Darcie, the first translator of Camden's *Annals*, we have no such full knowledge. His appearance in the field of English literature is strangely meteoric. Some half-dozen volumes, published in the years 1622–25 and one dated 1633, are all that remain of his work, and almost all the evidence of his existence. An engraved portrait with an inscription gives his origin: he was the son of Peter Darcie of Geneva. His own tiny book on the death of the Duke of Richmond carries us one step farther. It is entitled *Frances Duchesse of Richmond and Lenox her Funerall Teares*, and contains, besides an abundance of thin verse in French and English, a complete Order of the procession and ceremonial at the Duke's obsequies. In the prodigious

line of mourners marched a company, sixty-four strong, of gentlemen, servants to the deceased prince, as well as "eight gentlemen more of his domesticall servants, who carried his Effigy into the Church from the Charret." Among the sixty-four names, that of Mr. Abraham Darcie has a place. In what capacity he served the Duke we cannot tell, but it is evident that he was a zealous dependant, for in the same year he produced another volume, called *A Monumentall Pyramide to all Posteritie*, in memory of his late master, and in 1625 a pamphlet and pedigree under the title of *Honor's True Arbor*, or *The Princely Nobilitie of the Howards*, in which four poems in English and one in French are followed by a strange medley of verse and genealogy intended to proclaim the glory of the widowed Duchess's own family.

These obsequious effusions are of no interest in themselves, but they seem to warrant the inference that Darcie had not then been long in England, that he worked with great rapidity and industry, and that he showed remarkable quickness in acquiring a better knowledge of literary English. The *Funerall Teares* abounds in such lines as these :

"For neither loss of goods, feare of disgrace  
May have admission to that sacred place,  
Where I do leave him, but with wishes many  
That I were there to bear him company"

This is the effort of a foreigner who has not yet mastered either the grammar or the prosody of our language ; yet within the same year we find him not only translating a book of *Meditations upon the Vanitie of Human Life* into excellent and sonorous English, but strewing

the pages of this prose work with line upon line of unintended blank verse, showing clearly the extent of his reading, or his play-going, during the few months' interval, and the natural correctness of his ear. For example—

“ Thus after man hath sorrowed all his dayes  
Under the heavy burthen of his sinnes,”

is the opening of the chapter on Death, and in that on Hell there are some better effects still, such as—

“ the bitter sweetness  
Of Sinne, which is the death's-wound of his soule ”

Even now, well equipped with English and French, but knowing no Latin (as we are told by Fuller in a scornful marginal note to his *Worthies*), Darcie was not qualified to act as Camden's interpreter. But Camden's death was followed almost immediately by the publication of a French version of the first three books of the *Annals* by a Poictevin in England named de Bellegent, and this in its turn was translated into English by Darcie, who possibly had access to the manuscript while it was in process of being written. At any rate there can be little doubt that the English version was produced at great speed, and published without a careful revision, for it contains errors of several kinds and no inconsiderable number. A few of these are mere oversights, whether of the author or the printer's reader, a few others are mistakes committed by de Bellegent and simply reproduced by Darcie; the largest number are due to the misunderstanding of ambiguous passages in which the French does not follow Camden's Latin

with sufficient exactness, or in which there occur proper names of places having different forms in different languages. A single passage in Book III, containing errors of all these four kinds, may be given as a sufficient example. The account of Drake and Oxenham in 1580 appears in Darcie as follows—

“ Now being abundantly rich, silently revolved these thoughts in his munde. John Oxenham, who in the former voyages had been a souldier, mariner, and cooke under him, having by his valour obtained the name of Captain among the sailors, to tread in the footsteps of his master's fortune, in taking the mules loaden with wealth, and to sayle the *Australe* or *Meridian* Sea, he in the year 1563 began to sayle in those places, with a ship onely and equipage of 70 men ”

Here it is clear, first, that by a clerical or printer's error the words “ while he ” have been omitted after “ Now ”, secondly, that “ 1563,” which is given in the French version, is de Bellegent's mistake for Camden's “ 1575,” and is therefore hardly chargeable against Darcie; thirdly, that the words “ to tread in the footsteps of his master's fortune ” are a misunderstanding of the French “ *pour aller sur les brisées de sa fortune*,” which were an ambiguous rendering of the original, Oxenham's design being not so much to imitate Drake in what he had already done as to forestall him in doing it again. Lastly, in English we do not call the “ mare Australe,” the Austral or Meridian, but the South Sea. The same ignorance of usage, natural in a foreigner, is shown in another passage, where we find the Pacific spoken of as “ the South Sea, which is called *Peacible* or *Still* ”

These blemishes could not be passed over without



explanation, but they are, as a rule, unimportant and easily detected. Among them, however, there are one or two which might be misleading in spite of any general warnings to the reader. For instance, when we are told that Edward the Sixth always addressed Elizabeth as "his sweet Sister," we could hardly guess that the phrase should be "his sweet Sister Temperance," yet the chief point of the passage lies in the last word. Again, Darcie, misled by de Bellegent's capitals, represents the actual inscription on Elizabeth's Armada medals as being in French, and we lose accordingly our famous "*Venit, vidit, fugit*" and "*Dux femina facti*" in exchange for something much less memorable. "*Une Femme a conduit cette action.*" Once more, Archbishop Parker was consecrated by certain bishops, including John, Suffragan of Bedford, at Lambeth, not by "John Suffragant de Bedford de Lambeth." And perhaps the Poictevin gentleman mishandled Camden most unkindly of all when he inveigled Darcie into speaking "of those ships of China, of the Golden Eagle, of those faire Negroes," which a grateful Spaniard presented to Francis Drake. The "ships of China" were *vascula, vaisseaux*, dishes, the golden Eagles were the decoration which adorned them; and the "faire Negroes" were no albino race or wonder of nature, but usurped the place of one negro lady, black but comely.

It was probably with an intentional side glance at these imperfections that Darcie's only rival, Richard Norton, printed on the title page of his own version of the *Annals* in 1630 a description of the work as "Never heretofore so Faithfully and fully Published in English." The latter half of this advertisement was true: for

Norton translates the whole four books, whereas Darcie, as we have shown, had to limit his version to the three then contained in his original. The work was completed by a translation of the fourth book made in 1629 by Thomas Browne, a young Bachelor of Christ Church, afterwards Chaplain to the Princess of Orange and Canon of Windsor. In the word "Faithfully" Norton is less fortunate. If we take into consideration the fact that he is translating direct from the Latin, with the deliberate desire of surpassing in exactness, and with sufficient time to ensure this object, he cannot be said to have established a superiority worth boasting about. Darcie, at any rate, did not, with Elizabeth's descent, generation by generation, before him, describe her great-grandfather, Jeffrey Boleyn, as her "great-grandfather's father," translating *abavus* as if it were *atavus*. nor did he mistake the medals which commemorated the defeat of the Armada for "quoines," as his more "faithful" rival did. But granting, as we must, to Norton that he is more correct in place-names, and free, of course, from the errors involved in translating through a translation, he remains from the reader's, if not from the student's, point of view a less inspiring and probably a less representative interpreter of Camden. For while accuracy of detail was as natural to Camden as his walking gait, to Norton it seems to be an object of conscious effort, clogging his feet throughout: he picks his way where Darcie goes with a high, regardless step. It is true that the pace of the original is staid and dignified; but it is never tame or frigid: take off the Latin toga, and you should see the muscles tense and the breast heaving with the exhilaration of a great march. And this much at the least you will find in Darcie, as

any page of the great year 1588 will show. "The one and thirtieth year of her Reign, Anno Domini 1588," Norton heads it; but to Darcie it is "The one and thirtieth and most marvelous yere of her Reign, the ever-remembered Ycere of the Lord" for when the hour of the world's danger approaches, and the moment in which Drake must "peale terribly upon the Reare" of the Invincible Armada, he is no longer a mere translator, but an ardent lover of England and her cause; and if in this devotion he is forgetful of Camden, by so much the more is he one with Camden himself.

### III

The first subject of Camden's book is Queen Elizabeth the second is the re-ordering of the national life, summed up in the one word Religion; the third, the great game for freedom and dominion played by England against Spain and all that looked to Spain, whether in Scotland, France, or Ireland. Under these headings and beyond them lie a host of smaller matters—treaties, letters, speeches, movements among the people, actions and deaths of notable men, rebellions, plagues, and portents of nature. In a history written by way of *Annals* many or all of these must come together in a single year, and so perhaps for year after year: the effect would be at once fragmentary and monotonous. To avoid this, Camden has with much skill so woven his narrative that in a given year ample space is allotted to the subject of most importance at that time, those which are for the moment minor affairs are treated somewhat curtly, and occurrences too slight for separate mention

are sometimes left over to be incorporated with the final event of which they are really part. Thus, in 1587, out of the forty pages relating to events of the year no less than twenty-six are taken for the Execution of Mary Queen of Scots and its immediate consequences; while the voyage of Thomas Cavendish, "the third who since Magellan circuited the whole Earth," is noticed in a dozen lines, and the foundation of "the East Indies Companie" in half that number. Again, during the years when his fame was in the making, we hear nothing of Drake, though since 1569 he had been the Queen's Pirate and the navy's rising star; but upon his return in 1580 we are faced about and taken back to the Devon of his childhood and the Barke of "the old Pylote" plying in the Medway. thence full sail to Nombre de Dios and the South Sea, Magellan's Gallows, and New Albion, and at last triumphantly home to Deptford, where the *Golden Hind* bids farewell to salt water, and is "consecrated to perpetuall Memory"

Very different is the treatment of Elizabeth: no saying, act, or document of hers is shortened or postponed; she is the one central figure, and she holds the stage throughout. From her the story takes its beginning, with her it sinks into silence. Darcie with his blank verse is abundantly justified when he transfigures the title of the book. *Annals of English Affairs in the Reign of Elizabeth* is well enough in Latin; but what Camden compiled is far more accurately described as "The True and Royall History of the famous Empresse Elizabeth . . . True Faith's defendresse of Divine renowne and happy Memory." We have ourselves seen during the last half-century a great Queen of England admired and trusted because she was believed

to be in good judgment, industry, and power of will the equal of any of her ministers ; but in a history of her reign the figures of such men as Palmerston, Disraeli, Gladstone, and Salisbury will never be obscured by the shadow of the throne. Yet the older Cecil is seldom visible in Camden's pages standing, as he stood so patiently and warily for forty years, at Elizabeth's right hand: it is only when, "having now lived long enough to Nature, long enough to his own Glory, but not long enough to his Country, he rendered his Soul to God so quietly and peaceably" that we find in a few brief pages some outline of the incessant service which made the Queen "happy in so great a Counsellour, and the State of England for ever indebted to him". For the true acts of Burghley year by year we must look under another name: are they not all written in the book of the Queens of England?

For so placing and so illuminating the figure of Elizabeth, Camden had unquestionably sufficient warrant and sound reason. There is no doubting the personal influence of Good Queen Bess among the mass of her people—of Gloriana among the knights of her faery isle. To the former she was English of the English, as her parents both had been before her. Of the two, it was perhaps easier to perceive the likeness to her father, the man tyrannically royal and full of a too common sense. But it is more than possible that Creighton is right, and that it was the blood of the Boleyns, with their mingled coarseness, wit, and poetry, that made all the wide difference between Mary and Elizabeth, the Spaniard and the native-born. Mary had leaned too upon a husband, a foreign prince and a powerful one; Elizabeth stood alone, a Virgin Queen,

with none but her own to counsel or defend her, and was the more secure of the chivalrous devotion which has often in our history been the foundation of a strong personal loyalty. To her captains and her courtiers she was soon something more than a sovereign: she was at once a witch of subtleties past understanding, a comrade of pungent wit, fierce oaths, and a quick hand, a gracious lady of the Quest, a Fay gifted with immortal youth and ruling the enchanted Court in which all song must have its rise and all adventure its end. In short, to all her subjects, from the clods of earth to the spirits of fire and hearts of fine poetic gold, she came in time to be not only a person but a symbol, not only a queen but the ideal monarch, the outward, visible, and eloquent sign of the inward powers and aspirations which are the grace of a nation. If the reign of Elizabeth has any lessons for Englishmen, this must be one of them, that in the Crown, as in the mastery of the sea, lies one of the *arcana imperii*, one of those secrets of empire which are yet but half understood and less than half appraised.

In one thing only Camden must be thought to have wrongly judged the extent of the Queen's influence. In the settlement of the religion of the English people her share was less than he believed, for it was less than she intended, and he gives no hint that he recognized, or even suspected, her failure. He notes the facts—or such of them as he chooses—with exactness; but in the light of later reflection we cannot but give them a meaning different from that which they bore for him. It is true, as he represents, that Elizabeth worked tentatively, and through Parliament rather than directly; that her method was permissive and not coercive;

that she hated change, and maintained that " England embraced no new Religion nor any other than that which Jesus Christ hath commanded, that the Primitive and Catholike Church hath exercised, and the ancient Fathers have alwayes, with one voice and one mind, approved." It is true that in 1560 she issued an edict against iconoclasts, that in 1568 she had the Puritan leaders " clapped up in prisons," and suppressed in 1571 " the impudencie of others with a desire to innovate ", and Camden himself points the sharp contrast between the feeling of " the Queene who was Ever the Same " and " very unwilling to innovate anything in Religion," and the tendency of such outbreaks as that of Martin Mar-Prelate in 1587. But he does not see the true inference to be drawn from these facts, or realize how far apart Elizabeth and the mass of her people were in this matter. Her quarrel was with the Pope's dominion rather than with his religion. the majority in England were, and have been ever since, at enmity with both. Camden with his learning, his wide cultivation, and his gentle Christianity could not fail to be with Elizabeth ; buried in public records and affairs of State, he seems to have assured himself that all was as she would have it, and thought too little of the stubborn underwood that makes the forest of the future. If he had lived to complete his chronicle of the following reign, he might have paused when he came to record that in the great Abbey Church of Elizabeth's own Collegiate foundation of Westminster, where the wafer was still administered in the Sacrament, the English Commons in King James's time refused their corporate attendance ; whereupon the Church of St. Margaret, where they could have common wheaten bread and put

suspected papists to the proof, received them and receives them to this day. In short, Elizabeth was from first to last a Catholic: her people went another way, and have not yet returned. Of the foreign affairs of the reign nothing need be said here, the labyrinth is vast and intricate, the clues not even now certain. To unravel Elizabeth's character would be to understand much, but no writer has yet done that, and Camden does not even attempt it. This reticence is certainly not that of a courtier, for his sketch of Henry the Eighth in the Introduction to the *Annals* has no caution or flattery about it, and James would hardly have resented any estimate, however candid, of a predecessor with whom he found it difficult enough to stand a comparison. But Camden probably thought—or at least felt—that to dissect in public the personality of a sovereign but lately dead was an act of high treason, not to a monarch, but to the monarchy itself—a profanation of the symbol that had only yesterday stood for whatever is sacred and serviceable in the life of a great nation.



### 3. THE MOST FAMOUS SHIP

#### I

WHICH is the greatest name upon the roll of English ships? Which is the most sure of a lasting and effectual renown? There was a day when all England would have given but one answer: if you ask the Elizabethan of 1580 you will find him very positive upon the point, and not a little exalted. Drawn round the world by the Divine Hand, under the northern and the southern pole stars, victor over a hundred enemies, ballasted with royal treasure, and steered by the captured charts of Spanish admirals, the little ship that sailed as the *Pelican* comes home again as the *Golden Hind*. She brings her fabulous booty and her still more fabulous romance from Plymouth Sound to Deptford, and then and there the great names of the past—the *Christophers*, the *Great Harrys*, the *Dragons*, and the *Swans*—are all finally eclipsed. Drake, kneeling upon her deck, receives his knighthood from the hand of Gloriana, and the *Golden Hind* herself, bidding farewell for ever to wind and wave, is laid up as a national monument—"consecrated to perpetuall Memory."

She is remembered still, but it is hardly for her own sake: her story is a part of Drake's, and not the greatest part. Question your Elizabethan again some ten years

later, and hers is no longer the name that he will give you : he will speak of things that are even nearer to his heart, and to ours , for though an Englishman will always, I suppose, lick his lips over a tale of treasure, it is the fighting and not the plunder that he is really fitted to enjoy, and in his imagination even the jewels of the *Golden Hind* will shine with a less bright and steady glow than the battle lanterns of the *Revenge*.

The *Revenge* is a part of no man , she saw many captains and more triumphs than one She had a personality, as great ships always have ; she had a career, a life of her own She has a life after death—not only a posterity, but a true survival she may be said in no merely figurative sense to be on active service still. If the day ever comes when she no longer helps to keep the sea for us, it can only be when Time shall have paid off the British Navy.

The last of her successes is more freshly remembered by our friends than by ourselves. A neighbouring potentate, whom pride in his English descent had exhilarated to a pitch of splendid audacity worthy of an Elizabethan, challenged us by a telegram encouraging a vassal state to throw off the suzerainty of the Queen. If the message meant anything, it was a promise of armed support ; but the promise had none of the Elizabethan hardihood to back it, and proved bankrupt as soon as the Flying Squadron put to sea. It was not that this force was unknown, or suddenly created : the ships had long been on the Navy List, their names, guns, tonnage, and complement all as familiar to the German Kaiser as to the rest of the world. But there was a sense abroad of something more than brute strength : a memory of great traditions, of inherited skill, of

undaunted and indomitable tenacity. When on that 15th of January 1896 the English admiral hoisted his flag in the *Revenge*, and Her Majesty's marines marched on board under the command of Captain Drake, the enemy disappeared from the seas, and we made haste to forget another naval victory.

The lesson, we may hope, remains : this was not a triumph of physical force. The challenger's nerve, and not his ships, failed him, he feared his own destruction more than he desired ours. In an age even more materially minded, if possible, than those which went before it, we are increasingly diligent to measure our armour and our guns, to reckon up our horse-power and the number of our hits at target practice. It is not for any man to blame us—we should be wrong if we neglected these things, but we should be still more wrong if we forgot for a moment that there were years in our history when it was not we but our enemies who had the advantage of armament, and that, whether by combination or otherwise, such a time may come upon us again. Build as we will, we cannot secure ourselves against it for ever ; but we can forestall it by facing it with the remembrance of the past. It was by moral superiority that the Elizabethans came through their trial. The Spaniards were contending to maintain their hold upon the wealth of the world, and they fought as men will fight in such a cause—courageously, but not desperately. The English fought as, at sea, they must always be fighting, for national existence, and they took care—it was a great part of their strength—to leave their enemies in no doubt that they meant in every engagement to make the affair fatal to one side or the other. This is a policy which we did not follow

in the last of our nineteenth-century wars ; we may have been justified, we had our reasons, and we paid the full price. But on the day when we abandon it upon the sea we shall have thrown away our only sure defence and our deadliest weapon. Men and nations are never so nearly invincible and never half so terrible as when they are armed with contempt of death ; and that such an ardent temper can defy, discourage, and destroy mere bulk or numbers “ even beyond credit and to the Height of some Heroicall Fable ”—this is the meaning of the last fight of the *Revenge*.

## II

Drake was beyond doubt the greatest man who ever set foot in the *Revenge*, but it was not for him, or any like him, to sail her to the fulfilment of her unparalleled destiny. The imagination of two great peoples has made of him an almost supernatural hero, a gigantic figure of romance ; but in spite of his inexhaustible courage, his dazzling fortune, and the touch of extravagance which he caught from the spirit of his time, he was neither a Don Quixote nor a Prince Fortunate of mere adventures. For him there was nothing that could not be dared, but it must be dared with method and for an end in view. for him wisdom could never be “ wisdom in the scorn of consequence.” Setting aside their natural bravery and the fashion of the day, there was little in common between this heroic prototype of the modern Englishman, and Sir Richard Grenville, the inheritor of a temperament which has long been practically extinct among us, and was even then the

characteristic of a dwindling class. The men of courage without discipline, of enthusiasm without reason, of will without science—a type of arrested development surviving from the days beyond the Renaissance—fell with the Stuart kings, and were finally buried with the rebels of the '45. It is easy to say that they were of no use, these turbulent, insensate, self-willed children of aristocracy: at the least they added colour and vivacity to life, and these are something; now and again they had their great moments, when folly touched the height of tragedy, and left a true inspiration for those who are not too sober or too senile to receive it.

Sir Richard Grenville's record is plain. In 1585, when Raleigh's first colony for Virginia set out from Plymouth in seven ships, it was Sir Richard who took command of it, though he knew little of seamanship, and still less, apparently, of government. Letters from Lane, the head of the colony, to Secretary Walsingham, and dispatches from the treasurer to Raleigh himself, set forth Grenville's "intolerable pride" and his "insatiable ambition." His behaviour to his subordinates is such that they desire to be freed from any place where he is to carry any authority in chief. But what an irresistible fighter he is! On the homeward voyage he falls in with "a Spanish ship of 300 tunne, richly loaden"· having no boats, he boards her with an improvised one "made with boards of chests, which fell a sunder, and sunke at the shippes side assoone as ever he and his men were out of it." He reached home at the end of October, and was off again in the following April, when the Justices of Cornwall report to the Council—Sir Richard having evidently neglected to do so—that "being about to depart to sea he has left his

charge of 300 men to George Greynvil " On this voyage he sacked the Azores, took " divers Spanyardes," and performed " many other exploytes," but he reached Virginia too late to be of any service to the colony, which had already left for England Then came the business of the Armada, in which he had at least three ships of his own engaged, though he got little chance of distinguishing himself in his station off the coast of Devon and Cornwall His next voyage was that in the *Revenge* : and here again, in the one memorable action of his life, we cannot but see the working of the peculiar character which is visible in all the rest.

He was no quiet, resolute victim of duty, his stubbornness was not that of faithful endurance. If the evidence goes for anything, he was then, as ever, proud, rash, headstrong, and tyrannical, and he remained true to himself even in his famous dying speech, which has been garbled by every translator for three hundred years. " Here die I, Richard Greenfield, with a joyfull and quiet mind, for that I have ended my life as a true soldier ought to do, that hath fought for his country, Queene, religion, and honor, whereby my soule most joyfull departeth out of this bodie, and shall alwaies leave behind it an everlasting fame of a valiant and true soldier, that hath done his dutie, as he was bound to do " So it has always run ; it was not until 1897 that Mr. David Hannay first translated and restored the fierce concluding sentence : " But the others of my company have done as traitors and dogs, for which they shall be reproached all their lives and leave a shameful name for ever." That, to my ear, is the authentic voice of the Grenville.

## III

Is this a condemnation ? Is Sir Richard Grenville of the *Revenge*, after three centuries of fame, to be summed up as a ferocious and domineering fire-eater, hateful to his subordinates and disobedient to his chief ? I do not think so. It is true that we cannot look to him for an example of what a seaman should be, or what an officer should do, but he is none the less a beacon to all Englishmen because he was a great fighter and above the fear of death. To breathe the inspiration of his genius it is not necessary to tamper with the record of his character : we have but to look at him as he was, with open eyes, to think what we will of his faults, and then to turn once more to the story of his superb valour and his supreme achievement. Beyond question he and all his company are among the Immortals.

“ Heroes of old ! We humbly lay  
The laurel on your graves again ,  
Whatever men have done, men may—  
The deeds you wrought are not in vain.” <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Austin Dobson, *A Ballad of Heroes*.

#### 4. IS IT SHAKESPEARE? <sup>1</sup>

IT has been too often forgotten by the holders of creeds that faith is not a fortress, but a camp on the march: a camp, too, not of armed men, but of explorers. Till there is nothing more to know we must be moving continually forward, and an undertaking to show us that we are not on the right road is an offer of service, not an attack. We do well to accept it readily, but at the risk of the volunteer himself: he must first make trial of the path he recommends and take all the chances of discomfiture, tragical or ludicrous.

There is certainly plenty more to know about the Elizabethan Age, and the old guides have not always proved trustworthy on points of detail. Still we have advanced, and to most of us the road through Stratford-on-Avon has seemed one of the plainest and the straightest. The world has paid little heed to those who cry that this is no road at all, that the highway goes in reality by St. Albans, that the signposts have been intentionally falsified these three hundred years past. Many an adventurer has plunged with a gallop down that phantom highway, and gone to pot in the end; and here comes another with the same feverish

<sup>1</sup> This is the title of a book published in 1903 by "A Graduate of Cambridge."



haste and volubility, the same readiness to rush in, the same heroic disregard of obstacles

It can hardly be from lack of courage that the latest propounder of the question, "Is it Shakespeare?" has concealed his name from us, for he has in the pages of his book dealt with Elizabethan history and literature in such intimate detail as to expose his scholarship to the severest examination. The experts will doubtless be at him with their acid tests; we shall be glad to have their analysis in due course, but in the meantime one or two general remarks occur to us

First, the readers and critics of this book will need to remember that as science excludes prejudice, so also she knows no such terms as "profane" or "indecent." Argument, if it is to be at all, must be serious. serious not in the sense of non-humorous, for humour is a trenchant weapon too seldom used, but as being intently directed to carrying the point at issue. So long as the exploration is justified by its object, it may be done as the explorer can best do it, on foot, horse, or wheel, if it is really worth while to clear the way at all, we must not be afraid of spoiling the landscape by cutting up the old road. The authorship of the Shakespearean literature is certainly fit matter for argument; it follows that any serious argument on this matter should be sure of finding a publisher, and that so long as the parties to the argument are in earnest, neither should attempt to silence the other by an irrelevant cry that the moral reputations of the past or the religious feelings of the present are in danger. Those who, in the Shakespearean or any other cause, meet unorthodoxy or criticism with resentment instead of with a scientific examination, are justly suspected of being uncertain of

their faith, and too often they add a prudishness which will only admit truth on condition that it be not naked. Such tempers are perhaps in the majority, and the author of the book before us has every reason to expect rough treatment at their hands, for it is hardly too much to say that in the way of reputations he has touched nothing that he has not torn.

This is a work, then, for the study, and not for the drawing-room table. It is, moreover, one to be read with care, for it is written partly wrong way round and partly upside down, in order that the newest and most striking matter, or some of it, may come first and cover the familiar assumption which forms the real backbone of the argument. The skeleton, if we may rearrange it, is something like this. William Shaksper, of Stratford-on-Avon, was a low-born fellow of no education, quite incapable of reading the classics, writing good English, moving in society, or entering into aristocratic views of life. Further, his morality, though imperfect, was imperfect after the normal way, the way of a man with a maid. Francis Bacon, on the other hand, was well born, well educated, intimate with the highest persons in the State, aristocratic in habit and feeling. Moreover—and this is here made an indispensable qualification for the authorship of the Sonnets—he was the kind of incarnate devil known as an "Italianate Englishman," with a taste for vice of the abnormal kind. From these premises two conclusions are drawn: first, that "Shaksper" did not write the Sonnets, secondly, that Bacon did.

One part of this argument is old and has been answered again and again. Probably nine Baconians out of ten derive their opinion mainly from a feeling that the man

who, on Ben Jonson's testimony, had "small Latin and less Greek," could not have written the passages whose learning they admire. They allow nothing for genius: they do not know how much classical knowledge was acquired, for instance, by Tennyson (and still more by Keats) after leaving school; they forget that the creator of *Soldiers Three* was never in the army, that the writer of *McAndrew's Hymn* was not bred up a marine engineer. Moreover, in their eagerness to make the most of their case they minimize absurdly the possible sum of education obtainable at Stratford in the latter half of the sixteenth century. This particular heresy was fitted with a coffin, if not finally screwed down, by Mr Churton Collins in a *Fortnightly Review* article,<sup>1</sup> and we need not consider it further.

The other part of the argument is, however, new. yet not new enough to take account of the contrast between the characters of Bacon and Shakespeare. That contrast is so striking and so vital that it must, I believe, in default of direct evidence for their case of a kind hardly imaginable, always prove fatal to the Baconians before any competent jury. Our Graduate of Cambridge knows the difficulty well, and his method of getting round it, though inconsistent (he is often inconsistent), is certainly ingenious. The plays, in which the author has writ large his own character upon a vast and open page, do not help much in the required direction; they form, in fact, a very embarrassing record. They are accordingly treated somewhat cavalierly as the *joint* product of Bacon, the learned, aristocratic, and poetical partner, and of Shakespeare, the play-broker, the gag-maker, the handy man, who lent his vulgar

<sup>1</sup> April 1903.

shoulders to bear in public the weight of a fame which would have been for various reasons dangerous to the real author.

So our attention is directed mainly to the Sonnets. The view of two well-known but erratic men of letters is first adopted—that the Sonnets contain a revelation of a particular crime, one according with what we know of Bacon's but not of Shakespeare's character. But this thread is tangled up with others · one of which consists of a string of facts and fancies offered as direct evidence that Bacon wrote, and claimed to have written, the Sonnets and the poems *Lucrece* and *Venus and Adonis*, another, slipped in after an interval of some two hundred pages from "the scandal," is nothing less audacious than the proposition that "as a matter of fact and evidence we may safely say that Francis Bacon, with all his faults, was a man of a higher, nobler, and diviner nature than William Shakespeare" This statement and the argument by which it is led up to—an argument for "a belief in the innocent and platonic character" of the Sonnets—are saved from appearing in their true light, as fatal to the whole inference drawn from Bacon's abnormal viciousness, by a delicately balanced pendulum of inconsistencies, swinging from talk of sowing "wild oats" to phrases which "exclude the grosser view," and back again to more talk about "the conventions of the age for a courtier." The situation may be cleared up thus. Bacon was criminally vicious, the Sonnets are criminally vicious, therefore Bacon wrote the Sonnets; but it is highly desirable to count the Sonnets and even Bacon (if possible) as entirely innocent, and we can do so if you will accept his authorship as proved by the *direct* evidence,

What is this direct evidence? Very mixed in character. I will select two examples, the weakest and the strongest. The weakest is perhaps the sonnet preserved in the Lambeth Archbishopal Library, written (in French) by one La Jessée about 1595, and addressed to Francis Bacon. It contains the line, "*Bien que vostre Pallas me rende mieux instruite,*" which an unprejudiced reader might be excused for taking as a conventional tribute to Bacon's learning, and especially suitable in the case of one versed in statecraft and government. But no "Pallas," it appears, "was *Hastivibrans*, a Shaker of the Spear or Lance," in the Greek mythology and in one or two instances, on title-pages and dedications (but unfortunately not in the Sonnets) the name of the poet is spelt *Shake-speare*, with a hyphen. This, to a Graduate of Cambridge, is evidence that Bacon was generally known as Pallas, and translated himself, when dedicating poems, into Shake-speare. He backs it with other stuff of the same kind, including the opinion of an American named Edwards (author of a book on Butterflies<sup>1</sup>) to the effect that "the name Shakespeare is quite another, etymologically and orthographically, from Shagsper or Shakspere or Shaxpeyr or Shaxper." "It is not in evidence," this expert continues, "that any author lived in the reign of Elizabeth whose family and baptismal name was Wilham Shakespeare, or Shake-speare. There is no such historical man—no individual known who bore that name." No individual known to entomologists, perhaps; but there is for the rest of us the individual known to the generation before Bacon as Mr. John Shakespeare, father of William, of Stratford-on-Avon, who applied to the Heralds' College for a grant, and for whom was tricked the famous coat of

arms whose sole charge is the spear upon a bend. The drawing, with the name and the herald's manuscript notes as to the propriety of the grant, are still in existence. The same can hardly be said of Mr. Edwards as an authority on historical sources.

Let us turn to the strongest piece of evidence, that set out at the beginning of our book, as most likely to take the reader by storm. *Lucrece* was dedicated by William Shakespeare to the Earl of Southampton with these words among others · " The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end , whereof this Pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety " The first two lines of the poem begin with the words " From " and " Borne," so printed that the capital letters F, R, and B form a kind of set piece, which any one who wishes may believe to stand for FR B(acon) This, in some perverse way, explains why the pamphlet is said to be " without beginning " It is also useful as an echo or fulfilment of two lines in Sonnet xxvi., which hitherto have made good sense enough in their context, but are now to be read as revealing " the very name of the hidden author." These two lines are—

" Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee,  
Till then not show my head where thou may'st prove me."

How many of us have used the phrase " he can't show his head there again " without knowing its real meaning ! " Head " means, we now learn, nothing like " face " or " person," but is purely and simply the equivalent of " monogram." Bacon " shows his head " when he prints his monogram at the beginning of *Lucrece*. Further, the " love without end " of the dedication is

explained by another typographical curiosity, in two lines of the same poem it is "without end" because the lines form the end of the poem, just as the pamphlet was "without beginning" because "Bacon's head" was at the beginning. The last stanza of *Lucrece* ends as follows—

" The Romans plausibly did give con	sent
To Tarquin's everlasting ba	nishment.
" F	INIS "

The transverse guiding line, and the separate spacing of the syllables are, of course, not in the original: they are not even, I grieve to learn, due to the ingenuity of a Graduate of Cambridge; they were made in Germany. Still, I welcome them; they appeal to me; they are the kind of evidence I should expect. If Bacon was capable of the stupendous miracle of writing two masses of literary work mutually exclusive in character, he may well have thrown in a delicate allusion to the feat here and there. As a matter of fact—and this discovery is due to an Englishman, though only to a Graduate of Oxford—such cryptograms are freely scattered through the Sonnets. The one in Sonnet xxvi. is the only one I need give here; it is of special interest because it more than fulfils Bacon's promise to "show his head"; it reveals him "in the altogether"—

"Duty	so	great,	which wit so poor as mine
May	make	seem	ba re, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good con	cent	of thine	
In thy soul's thought all naked		will bestow it."	

Such, then, with the addition, of which I here make a

free gift to him, is the direct evidence offered by our author and he adds feelingly, "When there seem so few possible solutions that will float us out of the sea of difficulty, we are ready to catch at any straw." The cry is natural enough, for what a sea it is ! First there is the name of William Shakespeare on the title-page ; then the two entire sonnets devoted to playing upon the name "Will," ending with the line, "And then thou lovest me, for my name is Will" ; then the description of the writer as one for whom Fortune provided nothing better "Than public means which public manners breeds", who had to go here and there and make himself "a motley to the view" ; who was not of those who could glory in their birth, their skill, their wealth, their garments, their hawks, hounds, or horse ; nor even learned, but only earnest that his love should advance "As high as learning my rude ignorance." Not much sign of Francis Bacon ! But the sea of difficulty is wider and deeper far when we look into the content of the Sonnets. Of the infamous vice which our Graduate postulates in his fourth chapter, to match his evidence of the character of Bacon, there is, to one impartial reader at least, not a trace. "Mine be thy love," says this lover, "and thy love's use *their* treasure" "My *spirit* is thine, the better part of me." He speaks his love "like prayers divine . . . Even as when first I *hallowed* thy fair name" . and his petitions are : "Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege . . . How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show !" "Then give me welcome . . . Even to thy pure and most most loving breast." Sonnet by sonnet, and line by line, the waves of this sea roll over Bacon's head : if he had not shown it once more in his



cryptograms he must have been drowned full fathom five Happily there they are, to restore truth "all naked" to the world, and give our latest benefactor the right to his triumphant question "If Shakespeare really wrote these poems, why on earth should Francis Bacon want to hide his name at the beginning or end?"

Why indeed?

## 5. JOHN INGLESANT

THE author of *John Inglesant* lived long enough to know that his book is not among the books that perish. Since its first appearance a whole generation has passed away, with all that distinguished it ; a whole generation has sprung up, with thoughts as far removed as they could be from those of their predecessors. How short a remove after all that is in many ways, may be seen by any one who re-reads the book after twenty years — not only can the story, placed in an age already long past, never be further from the reader by any lapse of time, but the persons in it are among those who “ living not can ne’er be dead,” and the real drama is a drama not of persons but of forces that do not pass with the generations.

A novel without a hero, a drama without a plot. Such the author proclaims his book to be in the preface, which does not, however, tell the whole intention of what is to follow. A “ Philosophical Romance ” he calls it — though the story, as we shall see, is by no means a simple combination of Philosophy and Romance. But the description is true as far as it goes. Certainly John Inglesant is no hero. Not that he is never heroic—Lord Byron knew better than that, and so did the Parliament officer who stood by him on the scaffold—but he who is to be the hero of a romance must embody, potentially at least, either the writer or the reader : and

John Inglesant does neither. He is not even a puppet, as we ordinarily use the phrase of a lifeless character in fiction. The Vicomte de Bragelonne, in the romance which bears his name for title, is a kind of wooden lay figure made up as a gallant gentleman, but moved stiffly and unnaturally by the force not of his own but his creator's will. John Inglesant is better dressed and far more graceful, but he is a degree further from life, in that the strings which work him are pulled not by the author but by the other characters and forces in the book. It is in this sense that we accept Mr. Short-house's own jest, that at times John was beyond his control. He "had decided that his hero was to spend the second volume in Italy, but John Inglesant would have none of it; and they two, creator and created, fought it out stubbornly for a week." No, no; if John hesitated about the Italian journey it was only because the influence of Serenus de Cressy was balancing that of Father St. Clare; and even then "from the moment the Jesuit began to speak he knew that he should go." As for the stubbornness, certainly he was stubborn enough at times, but only when his line had been marked out for him. We are once tempted to hope for better things, when Father Hall tries to persuade him to keep out of the battle at Edgehill, "saying he had different and more useful work for him to do," and John rides with Rupert notwithstanding. But this he must have done to remain an Englishman at all, and it is the puppet's first and last natural kick. Later, when the adept terrifies him with a vision in a crystal ball, he takes the weird commotion roused by his protest for an allegory of his own spirit, "perverse and headstrong under the pressure of the Divine Hand." This was pure

self-deception, disobedient he might be, but only from weakness: he had not head enough to be headstrong, and his creator sees it clearly. "We call ourselves free agents;—was this slight, delicate boy a free agent, with a mind and spirit so susceptible that the least breath affected them?" The Jesuit had him entirely in his power, and Inglesant knew it. "I am not my own. I am but the agent of a mighty will, of a system which commands unhesitating obedience—obedience which is part of my very being. I cannot even form the thought of violating it." He was simply in a state of continuous hypnotism. Kneeling in church where he could see Mary Collet, and thinking more of her than of the prayers, he sees suddenly the Jesuit's messenger. "He got up quietly and went out. From his marriage feast, nay, from the table of the Lord, he would have got up all the same had that summons come to him." Generally, at a crisis, "his brain was full of confusion and strange noises." He hopes to meet and kill the Italian, his brother's murderer, but he takes no active steps to do so, and it is he that is dogged both in imagination and in fact by the assassin. When Malvolti does attempt his life, "the state of his victim's brain" saves him, Inglesant, "strangely frightened and distressed," falls backwards into the coach, and the fatal blow is warded off by Agostino Chigi. Everything that he can be said to do he does unconsciously, unintentionally, or by mistake. In the affair of the Duke of Umbria's cession to the Papal See his conscience tells him that he is on a doubtful errand; he goes dreamily on, to find at last that "for some reason or other he himself was considered by the clerical party to have been instrumental in obtaining this result." Irresolute as ever, he accepted

the reward "with all the grace of manner of which he was capable" Shortly after, even when his hand is on his weapon, he forgoes his long-sought vengeance, and when the old priest to whom he surrenders his sword takes him for the blessed St George, he is so confused and dreamy that he fails to understand, and confirms the error by totally forgetting in his excitement to name his brother, for whose repose he had spoken of offering daily masses

There is then no hero to this drama, and, speaking strictly, no plot. But there is an intention, and the more it is buried with seeming carelessness beneath a tangle of history, magic, and byplay of all kinds, the more surely it makes itself felt and remembered. Here we encounter in Mr. Shorthouse some of that subtlety with which he so liberally endows his Jesuits. He will risk nothing by a direct claim, a direct statement, that might challenge a contradiction or a consideration too summary for his purpose. The premises of his great argument are brought forward one by one in haphazard order, and always in a half light, as it were they are passed in as harmless, quiet ploughshares, and it is only when the end is reached that they are seen as a line of flashing swords. To many a reader indeed it is only after a second or third reading; but the effect so slowly attained is the more lasting.

Man's desire, says this teacher, is for the mystic birth, for "that divine fact that alone can stay the longing which, since men walked the earth, they have uttered in every tongue, that the Deity would come down and dwell with man" The vicar of Ashley told John Ingle-sant in his boyhood, "There is nothing in the world of any value but the Divine Light—follow it," but he

added, " what it is no man can tell you . . . it will reveal itself when the time shall come " Man's life then is to be a search, or rather a perpetual hope, that this Light may be with him during the journey on which he can do so little to direct himself His first difficulty is that he is both flesh and spirit ; his second, that he needs both freedom and guidance. The former of these two, the conflict between the Pagan and the more ascetic Christian view, is put with great skill Serenus de Cressy, with his intense eagerness and pathos, entreats Inglesant to cast aside the delights of reason and of intellect—" the beauty of that wonderful creation which God made, yet did not keep," for the life of self-sacrifice, the teaching of children, the visiting of the poor, the duties of the household , the daily walk with Jesus, to end with " the deathbed of a saint " This renunciation, " not of pleasure nor even of the world, but of himself, of his intellect, of his very life," he could not make, for he remembered that by the old vicar in England no such thing as this was required of him, and yet the heavenly light was offered as freely as by this man. In Italy the problem is put from the other side. That philosophic pagan, the Cardinal Rinuccini, sends Inglesant to Rome. " There is no solution," he says, " believe me, no solution of life's enigma worth reading But suppose there be, you are more likely to find it at Rome " Not in religion, of course. " Christianity is not of much use apparently to many of the nations of the earth What astonishes me is the interest you take in those old myths and dreary services."

Inglesant protests, but goes, and the life of Rome, with its Protean society, artistic, philosophic, anti-quarian, devout, and pleasure-seeking all at once, works

its effect upon him. The conflict becomes acute, he sees even the altars of Christ blazing with jewels and marble, while the poor starve around them in misery indescribable. Before the Apollo in the Belvedere Gardens he takes from beneath his vest a crucifix in ivory and holds it beside the statue of the god: the worn, helpless, and dying head beside "the noblest product of buoyant life." His friend smiles. "The benign god has doubtless many votaries, even now." The Cardinal goes further, and maintains that

"the renouncing of all bound and limit is in itself a truth, when any particular good, though only sensual, is freed and perfected. Surely it is more philosophical to take in the whole of life, in every possible form. This is the worship of Priapus, of human life of life ruddy, delicious, full of fruits, basking in sunshine and plenty, dyed with the juice of grapes, of life in valleys cooled by snowy peaks, amid vineyards and shady fountains, among which, however, 'Sæpe Faunorum voces exaudita, sæpe visæ formæ Deorum'."

Inglesant remembers de Cressy, and rouses himself from his delicious Alban wine to state the other teaching which he does not follow.

"Your doctrine is delightful to the man of culture, who has his nature under the curb and his glance firmly fixed upon the goal, but to the vulgar it is death; and indeed it was death until the voice of another God was heard, and the form of another God was seen, not in vineyards and rosy bowers, but in deserts and stony places, in dens and caves of the earth, and in prisons and on crosses of wood."

"It is treason to the idea of cultured life," said the Cardinal, "to evoke such gloomy images. My theory is at least free from such faults of taste."

“ ‘Why do they not burn you, Cardinal ? ’ said one of the Oratorians

“ ‘They do not know whom to begin with in Rome,’ he replied ”

The introduction of the Spaniard Molinos enables the author to suggest very effectively, and in exact accord with his wish, the solution both of this difficulty and of the other to which I have referred Molinos assures Inglesant that renunciation is not demanded of all ; there are some men whom God is determined to win by love, not by trials

“ Wherever you may find yourself, in Courts or pleasure-houses or gardens of delight, still serve Him, and you will bid defiance to imaginations and powers of evil, that strive to work upon a sensitive and excited nature, and to urge it to despair Many of these thoughts which we look upon as temptations of God are but the accidents of our bodily temperaments How can you, nursed in Courts, delicately reared and bred, trained in pleasure, your ear and eye and sense habituated to music and soft sounds, to colour and to beauty of form, your brain developed by intellectual effort and made sensitive to the slightest touch—how can religious questions bear the same aspect to you as to a man brought up in want of the necessaries of life, hardened by toil and exposure, unenlightened by learning and the arts, unconscious of the existence even of what is agony or delight to you ? Yet God is equally with both of these ”

After this burden had been lifted from his spirit, Inglesant saw much of Molinos and conferred with him upon “ the greatest of all problems, that of granting religious freedom, and at the same time maintaining religious truth ” The Molinists or Quietists are generally compared to our Quakers, but it cannot be doubted that it is the position and teaching of the Church of



England which the writer is presenting in this last and most original section of his work "It appeared for a moment," he says, in describing the growth of the new doctrine, "as if Christendom were about to throw off its shackles, its infant swaddling-clothes, in which it had been so long wrapped, and, acknowledging that the childhood of the Church was past, stand forth before God with her children around her, no longer distrusted and enslaved, but each individually complete, fellow citizens with their mother of the household of God" By the swaddling-clothes he means the practice of confession, by the shackles the rule of the priests The Count Vespriani, a native and a Roman Catholic, is characteristically chosen to express the darker view of the contrast "It requires," he says,

"to be an Italian, and to have grown to manhood in Italy, to estimate justly the pernicious influence of the clergy upon all ranks of society The hold which the priests have upon the civil government is maintained solely by the tyranny which they exercise over the spiritual life of men It is the opinion of Molinos that this function is misdirected, and that in the place of a tyrant there should appear a guide Now the importance of Molinos' doctrine lies in this, that he presses the point of frequent communion, and asserts that freedom from mortal sin is the only necessary qualification . I cannot tell you what a blessing I anticipate for mankind should this method be once allowed , what a freedom, what a force, what a reality religion would obtain ! The time is ripe for it, and the world is prepared "

The movement for a time carried all before it . it was approved by a Jesuit father, the Pope was known to countenance it, the bishops were mostly in favour of it, directors and confessors preached it Rome came near

to being in reality the seat of a Catholic Church. "It would indeed be difficult," says our author, "to estimate the change that would have passed over Europe if this one rule of necessary confession before every communion had been relaxed." But the Jesuits and Benedictines became alarmed, the Inquisition stepped in, and the bright vision faded away. When two hundred arrests had been made, the Englishman made a bold speech in public, but "a sense of hopelessness and of contention with an irresistible power," says the writer with acute perception, "probably oppressed Inglesant as he spoke." Long afterwards, in his own country, we hear him sum up the case to a chance visitor, towards the close of a life spent in the service of the Roman Church

"This is the supreme quarrel of all," he said. "This is not a dispute between sects and kingdoms, it is a conflict within man's own nature—nay, between the noblest parts of man's own nature arrayed against each other. On the one side obedience and faith, on the other, freedom and the reason. This is what the Church of Rome has ever done. It has traded upon the highest instincts of humanity, upon its faith and love, its passionate remorse, its self-abnegation and denial, its imagination and yearning after the unseen. It has based its system upon the profoundest truths, and upon this platform it has raised a power which has, whether foreseen by its authors or not, played the part of human tyranny, greed, and cruelty. To support this system it has habitually set itself to suppress knowledge and freedom of thought. You will do wrong—mankind will do wrong—if it allows to drop out of existence, merely because the position on which it stands seems to be illogical, an agency by which the devotional instincts of human nature are enabled to exist side by side with the rational."

At last then, in the final pages of this long and chang-

ing pilgrimage, followed with a constant sense of a tremendous conflict of forces carried on unseen, or half seen, by the wanderer himself, we come plainly upon the conclusion of the whole matter. The Roman Church and the English stand forward, bidding against one another for the life of man. To this craving of his, the world's desire for the Divine presence on earth, the one offers the Sacrifice of the Mass : the other too " offers the supernatural to all who come ; upon the altars of the Church, the Divine Presence hovers as surely, to those who believe it, as it does upon the splendid altars of Rome " But there is a difference. " Thanks to circumstances which the founders of our Church did not contemplate, the way is open ; it is barred by no confession, no human priest. Shall we throw this aside ? " More lies behind ; for he who can give or withhold the Divine Presence has mankind at his mercy : " it is not a question of religious freedom only ; it is a question of learning and culture in every form " Paganism the English Church may know, but it will be without excuse ; and lawlessness, but it will be a violation not of the letter merely but of the spirit ; there will be no sin without sinfulness, no devotion without reward " As a Church," the long argument concludes, " it is unique ; if suffered to drop out of existence, nothing like it can ever take its place."

It would have been easy to write at equal length upon this book in other aspects , to have spent time upon the romance, the history, the study of magic and the supernatural, the picture of society in the England and Italy of the seventeenth century. These are all true parts of the work, but they are not the vital part. The treatment of these would not have created the style for

which the book is memorable, would not have left upon the mind of the reader that irresistible impression that the author's heart is in his work to a very rare and significant degree. He is said to have spent upon it some twenty years of labour, rather it was the outcome of all the years of his life until the moment when he finished it; for it contains, as I have tried to show, the persuasive utterance of his personal creed: the utterance of a profound desire for that life which is the imitation of the life of Christ, for the life which in the Sacrament feeds upon the Divine by faith with thanksgiving, for the life which unites itself in freedom with the Church that is of all yet known to the generations of men the most truly Catholic at heart.

## 6. THE ONE AND THE MANY

1902

A RECENT article in the *Quarterly Review* has provided a spectacle both entertaining and instructive to those who move in literary circles. The proceedings partook of the nature of a *contredanse*, and the figure, though not new, was lively and well performed. The first to take the floor was a gentleman in a mask, since identified as Mr. Arthur Symonds, his *vis-à-vis* was Mr. Churton Collins, and after both had executed a preliminary fling in their different styles, each returned to his own side, and without pausing for breath, advanced again hand-in-hand with his supporters. Mr. Collins, who danced with a good deal of energy, but, perhaps, a little stiffly, was flanked by Professors Colvin and Courthope; Mr. Symonds was attended by Mr. Lang, who, unfortunately, had to leave early, and by Canon Anger, who arrived rather late. The audience was still hoping for a second round, but the uproar of the Peace and Coronation festivities seems to have made this impossible.

To come back to sober daylight, we have carried away from this spirited encounter the recollection of three points of interest. The first is concerned with the true nature of drama; should the characters be subordinate to the plot, or the plot be, as it were, lawfully begotten

by the characters ? This question we do not intend to deal with , for each party has already settled the matter in its own way, and we have no third solution to propose . But the two remaining questions are practical ones, and closely connected with the ordinary course of business in the literary world , they are the question of multiple anonymous reviewing, and the question of the utility of criticizing contemporary poetry

There is, we imagine, by this time no doubt about the practice in either case. To take the first, we may assume, without calling witnesses on oath, that multiple reviewing is common enough, and multiple enough, for the purposes of argument . We may also free ourselves from the personal element in the late controversy by recollecting that the *Quarterly Reviewer*<sup>1</sup> was only following an ordinary course, and one difficult to avoid altogether under the present system ; that two of his reviews were on so different a scale as to be legitimate in any circumstances , and that by reproducing verbatim certain passages of the one article in the other he took the best means of avoiding any appearance of posing as two independent critics . We have, then, to deal with an abstract case . Balbus, poor gentleman, builds a lofty rhyme ; Carus publishes the same ; Dares praises it in half a dozen anonymous reviews , Entellus damns it in several others . At first sight it would appear to the innocent onlooker that no great harm is done , the country cousin will think there are more persons of critical genius about than there really are, but the practical results merely come to this, that part of the public trusts Entellus and neglects Balbus, part believes

<sup>1</sup> Articles in the *Quarterly Review* were, in 1902, still unsigned

Dares and buys the book ; Balbus and Caius divide the profits, especially Caius.

The answer to this, lately put forward in many discussions, is that what is fun to us may mean death to Balbus, obscurity to his rhyme, however lofty, and money out of pocket to Caius, in whose prosperity we are all concerned. For it may happen that Entellus knocks out Dares before the eyes of the public, who will thenceforth invest less in this particular company's stock. Such a danger, if real, would sober the most frivolous in a moment, but it is, I believe, only the nightmare incidental to a diet of Ambrosia. The casualty lists of the past, if examined, might show many poets wounded by criticism, but none killed, and I firmly believe that there is not to this day one deserving name absent from the roll-call of English literature. Of course to the poet, who is always poor, the loss of health or reputation is not all; full well we know that loss of pence would trouble him very nearly as much, but nowadays he has not, in all probability, even this to fear, for the buyer follows not criticism but advertisement, and abuse is the best advertisement of all.

It is true that this is not the whole answer; complaint is also made that sometimes it is Dares who gets the start of Entellus with a succession of well-planted strokes, and the poet is quoted rather too high than too low in the market. But surely this too is a little unreasonable. "When is a poet not a poet? When he is overpraised," is a foolish conundrum with an absurd answer. Besides, *cui malo?* who is the worse? It is no doubt annoying for Entellus to see his advice disregarded, but after all the critic, at any rate, is not paid by results; and he has the two con-

siderable pleasures of denunciation and of voting in the minority. Think too of the gain to the practice of poetry, which loses half its disrepute by losing all its poverty; and to the activity of Caius, who can afford on the profits of one boom to publish at his own risk fifty less arresting volumes.

But our imaginary controversialist now gives the question another turn; he brings forward his big moral battery. The conduct of Dares in pushing his friend Balbus through seven editions, when, to judge by Miltonic standards, five pounds would be more than five times the value of his wares, is dishonest, a fraud on the public, possibly a conspiracy. Certainly, to praise what you do not esteem, and to go about deliberately pretending to be a weighty body of unanimous opinion when you are merely an unsupported and perhaps insupportable *ιδιώτης*, this would be not only a dishonourable but an undignified method, resembling too nearly the trick of the pantomime army, or the Alder-shot manœuvres. But dishonourable or undignified tricks injure the performer rather than the audience. And even if, as the cynic will suggest, multiple payment is an ample compensation to the critic for the moral and intellectual damage he thus inflicts upon himself, this does not apply to poor Balbus himself, who suffers in pride and in popularity when the inevitable exposure comes. Save him from such friends—*et dona ferentes*. As for the busybodies themselves, inept and ridiculous as their conduct is, no evidence has yet been adduced that they are actuated by any feeling but genuine enthusiasm for the works they praise. If they conspired with Caius, or borrowed from Balbus, the case would wear a different aspect.



Then there is the fraud on the public. We are aware that in this happy country it has never been found necessary to legislate against advertisers over-praising their own goods, and we should be sorry to think that poetry might be the first bad case to drive us to extremities. But it must be remembered that poetry may be poor in quality without being absolutely unfit for human food, and further that men differ widely in their powers of assimilation, what Mr Symons would starve on, may be grape-nuts to Mr Collins, who in his turn has no appetite for the lamb which satisfies Canon Ainger. Viewed even as a speculation, we venture to think that poetry offers the investor as good a "flutter" as any stock in the market, and that the vendors and promoters are as honest as others in the prospectuses they send out.

There remains the adverse multiple critic; he may be actuated, they say, by spite or jealousy. He may, but we doubt if his fire will be any the deadlier. A very big gun, we are now told, failed to penetrate John Keats's armour, and why should the more modern pom-pom do better with his ten or a dozen little shells? Balbus must be a poor builder if his walls crumble at the sound of any number of trumpets, bray they never so loudly.

This brings us round to our third point, harmless the criticism of contemporary poetry may be, but can it be useful? Certainly not to the poet, who, we are credibly informed, is only distracted by it, it "spoils his temperament," and this is regrettable, especially when the temperament has been carefully cultivated. And it does not seem very reasonable to expect that one who has failed (*te judice*) to sing well will do better because you kick him in the open street. But you have

a call to instruct the public ? My dear sir, what Englishman would ever take a lesson in the appreciation of poetry ? But you are an expert ? Down with your signature then, and let us know your qualifications Have you written verse ? “ No ” is a confession of incompetence almost fatal, and too improbable to be worth considering “ Yes ” leads to the further question, “ successful or unsuccessful ? ” Surely not successful, you would not waste your time in reviewing, yet if unsuccessful you are even worse equipped than he who never trod the Muses’ hill You write to keep the standard high in the interest of posterity ? Most futile of all, for posterity never errs or takes advice, her memory is as short for criticism as it is long for poetry When the stars threw down their spears, and watered heaven with their tears, they then and there gave Blake a bower in Paradise from which he will never be driven by any number of well-drilled angels flaming the little swords they call *Ephemera Critica*.

## 7. A NEW DEPARTURE IN ENGLISH POETRY

IT is undeniable that nowadays we have no "great poets," no writers who can hope to draw an audience half as large as that which crowded to hear the chief Victorian singers, none who can secure a tenth part of their popularity and influence, or a hundredth of their pecuniary reward. From time to time the public, the new democratic public, with the natural uneasiness of the head that wears a crown which was never meant for it, insists upon asking, by the mouth of some such spokesman as a professor of English literature or an eminent lawyer out of office, why so lamentable a state of things has come about, and what it means. To this it has been replied, not altogether unreasonably, that it is for those who have asked the question to answer it if they can. The business of the poet is to make poetry, and the adequate reception of his work, the recognition of his value as singer or seer, is the business of the public. If high pedestals are out of fashion, let the buyers of statuary say why. For the sculptors that is a minor matter; they, at any rate, know what they are about; and it is even possible that they prefer the closer admiration of a few on their own level to the more vague and unintelligent worship of a mob below.

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To the critic, however, whether he be a cool scientific observer or an anxious lover of literature, or both at once, the question remains one of interest and importance. Is the poetry of to-day carrying on the great tradition? and if so, why is it not recognized and acclaimed?

In the quiet of a club-room, where the roar of the street is completely shut out, I hear this matter discussed from time to time between Mr. Fondly, a great lover of the classics, and young Swiftsure, a journalist and man of letters, with many friends among the poets of the present day. The older gentleman is regretful but positive. The poets of to-day are minor poets, they have metrical skill and some facility, but they are not great. "We find," says he, "in the poets of the past two things at least—a consistent vision which impresses us, and a music whose sound gratifies our expectation. The moderns are not impressive or satisfying in the same way, and to us this is plain proof of their inferiority."

Swiftsure is an intimate friend and pushes his counter-attack to the verge of invective. "No, the living writer's work is not visible to you as a consistent whole because it is not yet finished. His style is not satisfying to your ear because its cadences are new. The finer sense distinguishes at once, yours waits for the recommendation of time and familiarity. It has always been so with the multitude of readers. The men they belittled in the 'thirties they magnified in the 'seventies and 'eighties; those are to-day your Tennysons and Brownings. There are others now writing who may live to conquer you yet, and certainly some who will fill high niches in the house of posterity, when they

have been long enough dead. Posterity will know their work as well as you know *Paracelsus* or the *Idylls of the King*, and will try to reject all that comes afterwards as you now reject anything which dares to succeed your favourites without copying them "

"Τὰ καλὰ πάλαι εὐρηται," says Mr. Fondly with untroubled complacency, " but I am always glad to see new poetry, when it is good "

" Pardon me—when it reminds you of the classics. The Athenians were ever seeking something new The Bœotians, I am sure, wanted nothing but the old In painting, music, poetry, you hate to be dragged an inch beyond your former pleasant experience You forget—you do not realize—what you are losing "

" I realize what I am keeping," says Mr. Fondly

" Oh yes ; the *Odes of Horace* and the *Republic of Plato* , but it is not true that they are the sum of all poetry and all philosophy Your Chaucer, your Milton, your Wordsworth, all went beyond them, though, if you had been their contemporary, you would have found each of the three as superfluous as you now find those who go beyond *them* in their turn "

" And what is it to ' go beyond,' exactly ? "

" Poetry," says Swiftsure, " is a song of rainbows. It told the ancients of a few primitive colours, it tells us of a thousand tints in exquisite gradation From the old poets you get certain feelings in great splendour, but never the feeling of your own generation, the very touches that could give you the most intense and intimate pleasure. Life has learnt much since Horace's time, both in feeling and expression In a sensitive anthology of English lyrics, chosen for their fineness and not their associations, the poems of the last fifty

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years would outnumber those of the previous five centuries."

"Indeed?" says Mr Fondly "And will you tell me the names of the great poets in your anthology—the living ones, I mean?"

"Not now," replies Swiftsure; "you must read them first"

They go off, laughing together, and their audience is left to pick up and examine the foils they have been using Upon reflection, Swiftsure's best weapon seems to be the argument from feeling, the most vital and distinguishing element in literature of any kind. There can be no doubt of the development wrought by modern science and philosophy in human feeling, or rather in that combination of thought and feeling which determines each man's view of the world. Coventry Patmore used to tell Mr Bridges that the only use of science is to provide fresh images for poetry. Certainly Milton did use scientific knowledge in this way; he tells us how Satan's shield

"Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening, from the top of Fesolè,  
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands  
Rivers or mountains in her spotted globe"

It may be objected that here, as Dr. Johnson pointed out, "he expands the adventitious image beyond the dimensions which the occasion required." No such charge can be brought against the best of the moderns There is nothing adventitious about the knowledge of recent scientific theory which underlies such a passage as this, on the long dark night of winter, slowly lengthening,

“ And soon to bury in snow  
 The earth, that, sleeping 'neath her frozen stole,  
 Shall dream a dream, crept from the sunless pole,  
 Of how her end shall be ”<sup>1</sup>

Even this, perhaps, does not exactly support Patmore's opinion, or pretended opinion, but it does show that science can enrich a poet's mind with a fresh beauty of imagination and sentiment; and there are, in fact, throughout the wide extent of this particular poet's work, passages reflecting upon the principal activities of human life which could not have been written before a certain date not long past, or which, if written earlier, must have lacked the depth and delicacy that make them so delightful. These we may take as read, for Mr. Bridges is recognized by many even of the present generation.

Our next example shall be from the work of a younger poet—Mr. Laurence Binyon. Let any reader who is willing to follow my argument sincerely dismiss all thought of competitive or even of comparative merit, and let him set side by side the two prophetic visions of the earthly future of the race of man, one as described by Milton's Angel (*Paradise Lost*, xii 485-551), the other as half revealed and half unrevealed to the dying patriarch in *The Death of Adam*. Better still, let him contrast candidly the two descriptions, in the same poems, of the first man's sensations immediately after the moment of his creation.

“ About me round I saw  
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,  
 And liquid lapse of murmuring streams, by these,

<sup>1</sup> *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges*, vol. II. : “ November ”

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Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,  
Birds on the branches warbling, all things smiled;  
With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.  
Myself I then perused, and limb by limb  
Surveyed, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran  
With supple joints, as lively vigour led,  
But who I was, or where, or from what cause,  
Knew not "

*Paradise Lost*, viii. 261-271.

To the modern poet the wonder is incomparably deeper  
than that.

“ On my opening eyes  
The splendour of the world shone slowly in,  
Mingling its radiant colours in my soul.  
Yea, in my soul and only in my soul  
I deemed them to abide · sky, water, trees,  
The moving shadows and the tender light,  
This solid earth, this wide and teeming earth,  
Which we have trodden, weary step by step,  
Nor found beginning of an end of it,  
I deemed it all abounding in my brain;  
The murmur of the waters and the winds  
Seemed but a music sighing from my joy  
Then I arose, and ventured forth afoot;  
And soon, how soon, was dispossessed of all!  
By every step I travelled into truth  
That stripped me of my proud dreams, one by one,  
Till all were taken On such faltering feet  
By gradual but most certain steps I came  
Into my real and perfect solitude,  
Alone amid the world that knew not me ”

Here again there is no question of merit involved; but  
it is the simple truth that philosophy has given to  
Mr. Binyon an opportunity which the theology of the  
seventeenth century could not offer to Milton.

Examples, quite as striking, of this newness of oppor-



tunity are furnished by Mr Sturge Moore's poems. In *The Centaur's Booty*, for instance, under the guise of a picture essentially Greek in its imaginative beauty and vigour, he has subtly presented to the reader perhaps all that is poetically valuable in the Nietzschean idea of the Superman as now current among us, and at the same time, by a still subtler counter-suggestion, he has justified and commended afresh to us the tenderness of Christianity and civilization. Let us go further and put this poet also to the test of parallel passages; let us read first that famous *canzone* of *In Memoriam*—the fifty-sixth—in which Tennyson glances at some of the darker suggestions of geological and biological science; then turn to Mr Moore's poem *For Dark Days*. Greatly as *In Memoriam* is at present undervalued, most unprejudiced critics will probably agree that in purity of outline, in restrained passion, and in deep beauty of significance, Tennyson's stanzas excel the younger man's very beautiful and significant lines. But, as before, such a comparative estimate is not to my purpose; the point is that the later poem is also the newer; it marks a development. The poet of 1849 is concerned about science as it may support or deny his own personal immortality. To the poet of to-day the same theories suggest a different train of feeling; he renounces all the beauty of the material world if he must live in it by the same law as the tiger and the shark; he unconsciously records the change from the mainly egoistic or salvationist to the mainly sympathetic or Christian view of social life.

“ Oh, it is nothing that a day is fair,  
If life cannot be sweet !  
It souls cannot be lovers, and if care  
School not desire's feet !

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If always generations generations breed,  
And race give place to race  
Sapped by inadequacy, doomed to bleed  
And, dying, pine for grace !

Only if fact can answer reason's prayer  
Both in one life and all,  
And in resultant beauty souls be good ,  
Only if towards that goal each day we fare,  
And never stand below where we have stood,  
Answer I to your call,  
Ye stars, or yours, ye flowers of field and wood."

It is, of course, not only science and philosophy that have helped the moderns to be modern , the practical life of a strong and chivalrous generation has done much to quicken feeling and to purify it There has been a call, not merely for poems of patriotism—we had many such already—but for songs of a new pride and a new loyalty which were too distinctive, too personal to this age, to be satisfied by the language of another The love of country, symbolized and intensified by devotion to a great Queen, has found utterance in Mrs. Woods' *Princess of Hanover*, in a passage which certainly could not have been written in any year in English history before 1887—not even in the greatest year of Elizabeth herself. The lines—of which part only must be here quoted—are spoken by the Electress Sophia, rebuking her ignorant daughter-in-law, who has flippantly declared that she does not wish to accept the throne of England .

“ Consider

What 'twere to be a queen,  
A queen of men, not marketable serfs.  
Perchance you lean out from your balcony  
One spring day, in the prime and rapture of youth,

And mark the immense crowd billowing beneath,  
 A sea of worshipping eyes, a ripple of hands  
 Claiming you theirs, lifting you to the height  
 Of their hearts' throne—all fathers, lovers, friends  
     All yours and yours for ever.  
     These are the Immortals,  
 Not to be changed by mutability  
 Of the inconstant blood, or alienated  
 By circumstance, or in the unfeeling grave  
     To slumber careless.  
     You the years will change,  
 The small mechanic hours   you will grow old,  
 Dim-hearted, cinder-gray, will drop your playthings  
 One after one—Ay ! but on any day  
 Choose you come forth, outstretching crooked hands  
 Like those youth mocks, whispering with faded mouth  
 Such as men scorn, ' My People '—and lo ! the Immortals  
 A sea of worshipping eyes, a ripple of hands  
 Claiming you with the old rapture, lifting you  
 To the height of their hearts' throne, yours as in youth,  
 Yours on through age to death—sons, lovers, friends  
 This were for her that had a queen's heart."

That is a modern piece of poetical history, the history,  
 not of what men do, but of what they are, the history  
 that is vital, new from day to day, and eternally  
 significant.

By these examples, and by a hundred more like them  
 —I have quoted only from volumes of a certain scope  
 and easily accessible—it would be possible, I think, to  
 prove even to Mr. Fondly that there are living poets not  
 lightly to be dispensed with by contemporaries who are  
 also living. It will still be open to him to question  
 whether they are great poets. Being pressed, he will  
 probably admit the phrase in the case of Mr. Bridges,  
 whose modernity is covered with classic folds by his

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grave Miltonic mantle Of the rest he will say that they are not sufficiently outstanding personalities, and that they have not, so far, treated of great subjects on a great scale. The argument, though not a negligible one, is by no means conclusive ; it is perhaps too soon to measure the personality of living writers ; it is certainly too late to set up a standard which ignores the possibilities of lyric poetry, and would, if insisted upon, result in classifying Burns among the minor poets. We cannot forget that the sonnets of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, the odes of Milton and Keats, would prove the greatness of those authors if their longer poems had never been known to us, or overlook the fact that the plays of Shelley, Coleridge, and Matthew Arnold are more and more unpopular with a public which buys anthologies by the thousand. But there are, no doubt, many who regret that the writers of to-day spend so much power on fine traceries and so little in the more patient labour which is necessary to build the loftier towers of rhyme. Something is wrong ; and since there appears to be no lack of energy in the poets, or of appetite in their readers, the suspicion arises that it is the traditional style of these grand compositions which no longer attracts either builder or buyer, no longer seems adequate to the needs of the time. It may be, in short, that what we are waiting for is not a new set of poets but a new poetic form.

This belief, if it gains upon us, will necessitate no revaluation of old masters, no revision of the orthodox creed ; Shakespeare and Milton will remain the great Twin Brethren of our national worship ; but we shall look for the spirit of the epic and the poetical drama, which cannot die, to be reincarnated in a form not less

immortal but more intimately human. Nor does it follow that when this new form comes there will at first sight be anything startlingly novel about it, even the great distinctive styles of architecture were developed each from a preceding style, and Durer himself failed to invent in the way of imaginary monsters anything more than combinations of wings, talons, and jaws already existing in nature. In the new poem, then, we may expect to find plenty of resemblance to the old; only there will be just the difference, "*orientis non cadentis lux dei*"—the flush of dawn, which is so like and yet so indescribably unlike to the flush of sunset.

From the moment when the first volume of *The Dynasts* appeared there was, to one watcher at least, no doubt that the new light was in the sky. It was barred by some small patches of mist or cloud,<sup>1</sup> but it was unmistakably rising, it was, in my belief, the forerunner, not of one day only, but of many great days in the poetical life of the English-speaking race. For Mr. Hardy has done something more than produce a brilliant

<sup>1</sup> In his anxiety to give concise expression to ideas new in English poetry, Mr Hardy has introduced artifices which disfigure his style and obscure his meaning. Here and there he tangles his syntax with extravagant inversions and misplaced parentheses. Repeatedly he uses the prefixes un- and in- to convey the idea, not of a reversal of the action expressed by a verb, but of the mere absence of such action. Thus from the line, "His projects they unknow, his grin unsee," he wishes us to understand that "They know not his projects, see not his grin." On this principle we might say that Mr. Hardy was unwriting his book for fifty years before he began writing it. His practice is the more confusing because in some passages he follows the ordinary usage. "I have unlearned to threaten her [England] from Boulogne." In other ways, too, he abuses the inventor's privilege; as when he writes "finite" in place of "final," "voidless" for "unavoidable," and "qupt" for "equipped," making these words deny their ancestry and relations for the sake of some small temporary emergency.

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and novel development ; he has shown the line along which further developments can be successfully made. Indeed the advantages of the new road are so striking, and the mass of material lying ready to be carried along it so great, that it will not be surprising if those who come after Mr Hardy are for some time content to follow it closely rather than strike off at once on divergent tracks of their own. He has found out a way, and it is a highway.

To understand fully what it is that Mr. Hardy has achieved, it is necessary to consider for a moment what was the problem before him. A strong bent of patriotism, traditional, local, personal, had long interested him in "the vast international tragedy" of Napoleon's career. "The provokingly slight regard paid to English influence and action throughout the struggle by those continental writers who had dealt imaginatively with it, seemed to leave room for a new handling of the theme which should re-embody the features of this influence in their true proportion." He determined accordingly to set out the story of this "Clash of Peoples" in a poem of gigantic scale, and with the English nation for hero.

For a work of this kind there were two conventional forms available, but the fate of certain forerunners gave warning that neither could be relied upon. A play must be either for the stage or the closet ; but few poetical stage plays ever come to the light or survive their birth by more than a day or two ; while any publisher will give evidence that no one now buys a play which is not acted. The epic, on the other hand, is too transcendental ; its tone is too unfamiliar for the expression of a modern view of life. It can give the form and pressure of an age, but it will be an age distant

by something more than time ; its characteristic method is to exhibit the heroic element in a man or a generation by a process of semi-deification, by making the characters at once highly typical and extremely singular, by giving them a stature and a speech that never were on land or sea. This would not suit Mr. Hardy's genius, it is in the most familiar tones of life that he is always at his best ; and his idea of the heroic—the modern idea of the heroic—is no longer a vision of men who are more than men, who are abnormally gifted and perhaps inequitably tended by superhuman powers, but a story of men great among their fellowmen, because in them is more forcibly shown forth the working of the one universal power—whether it be held natural or divine—by whose operation all alike must live and move and have their being.

Of the two inadequate forms the epic was clearly the less promising for an experiment. The poet was forced back upon the drama—forced therefore to grapple with his problem hand and foot. Not only was there the initial difficulty of ensuring that the drama, when written, should command the hearing usually given only to an acted play ; it was also necessary to enlarge the machinery by which it was to be presented. Scope must be found, not only for the events, characters, and motives displayed in its action, but also for a clear exposition of the writer's philosophical view of them. In other words, Mr. Hardy, having decided on a chronicle play, had to provide for it a theatre under his own management, and fit it with a running commentary at once imaginative and philosophical, complex and consistent.

His solution of both these difficulties is a simple one, so simple that it has—for those who look back upon it—

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the inevitableness of the greatest triumphs. For his theatre he took the reader's mind, for the commentary, his own; add some ten years' labour, and the thing is done. The full meaning and promise of these devices will be more apparent if I attempt some account of the result.<sup>1</sup> Let us deal first with the chronicle play or historical pageant, taken by itself. This begins with the outbreak of war between England and Spain in March 1805, and ends at midnight after Waterloo, when "the moon sinks, and darkness blots out Napoleon and the scene." It is presented, I have said, in the mind of the reader, as in a theatre under the absolute control of the author; and rarely has any play been so vividly seen by the outward eye as this by the inward. Mr Hardy's success here is mainly due to his stage directions, which differ by the whole breadth of genius from any hitherto imagined. They are terse, brilliant, memorable, and in their power of suggestion almost hypnotic. What we are told to see, we see. Tract after tract of Europe lying below us like a map in relief; men and nations moving, swarming, contending like ants, armies creeping across provinces like molluscs on a leaf, ships of the line and transports floating over the sea like moths. Then, when the moment of action approaches, at the mere word of

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this article being to draw attention to the merit and novelty of Mr Hardy's design, I need not turn aside to criticize either the details of the work or the craftsmanship displayed. It is enough to warn the reader that in so vast a poem he will, not unnaturally, have some disappointments to suffer. Mr. Hardy's peculiar philosophy has the artistic disadvantage of forcing him to belittle all human character, and to impoverish and even falsify history by stripping it, to a considerable extent, of human motives. For some ears, too, the poet's command of his instrument is not invariably perfect, his verse can be grandly deep and exquisitely poignant, but it can also now and then sound a scannell note or fall into the key of prose. These criticisms do not affect my argument.



command our point of view descends nearer to earth, voices come to us as they come to those who descend a mountain in clear air, "thin and small, as from another medium," till at last we lose the sense of distance, and hear the characters speaking in the tones of the life we share ourselves

Once on earth, too, the necessary scene-shifting is performed with a swiftness and a power of unbroken illusion not possible upon any material stage, and when flesh and blood have played out their dramatic moments, we are taken back with equal sureness to the high aerial point of view. For instance, after the ceremony in Milan Cathedral, grandiose and ironically suggestive, where Napoleon is crowned by his own hands with the crown of Lombardy, as Emperor of the French and King of Italy, the Act ends with this direction :

"The scene changes. The exterior of the Cathedral takes the place of the interior, and the point of view recedes, the whole fabric smalling into distance and becoming like a rare, delicately carved alabaster ornament. The city itself sinks to miniature, the Alps show afar as a white corrugation, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Genoa appear on this and that hand, with Italy between them, till clouds cover the panorama "

The gigantic proportions of the work may be guessed from the fact that it contains 130 scenes, introduced and closed with this same vivid intensity of setting ; and that among them are numbered nearly twenty of the greatest battles in European history, all sharply distinguished from one another, all fully presented to sight and intellect at once, with their outward features and underlying significance. For test examples the English reader will

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probably turn to Trafalgar and Waterloo rather than to Austerlitz and Wagram, or even to the fights of the Peninsula. In neither will he be disappointed ; for Mr. Hardy has not only described, condensed, and dramatized both with remarkable skill, but to the authentic history of both he has dared to add inimitable touches of his own. The plain unadorned story of Nelson's dying hours, as told by Dr Beatty, is one of the most moving passages in our language, that any hand could give a fresh touch of beauty to it, without taking from its simplicity, would have been thought impossible before the following lines were written

“ NELSON (*suddenly*)

‘ What are you thinking, that you speak no word ? ’

“ HARDY (*waking from a short reverie*)

‘ Thoughts all confused, my lord, their needs on deck,  
Your own sad state and your unrivalled past,  
Mixed up with flashes of old things afar—  
Old childish things at home, down Wessex way,  
In the snug village under Blackdon Hill  
Where I was born The tumbling stream, the garden,  
The placid look of the gray dial there,  
Marking unconsciously this bloody hour,  
And the red apples on my father's trees,  
Just now full ripe ’ ”

If the poet can hear on board the *Victory* words audible to no other ears, he can see on the eve of Waterloo that which was visible to no eyes but his. When the sound of the drums beating the *générale* with “ a long-drawn metallic purl of sound ” echoes into the historic ball-room, and the Highlanders “ march smartly down the room and disappear,” we, too, can now discern, “ step-

ping out in front of them, That figure—of a pale drum-major kind, Or fogleman—who wore a cold grimace.” To set off this grimace there was needed one touch of tenderness and one of humour ; both are given in the little scene next morning, in which two English-women, mother and daughter, stand at a window in their dressing-gowns to see the troops march out to the battle, and the younger lady is reproved by mamma for waving a tearful good-bye to a young Hussar officer, her partner of a few hours ago

It is not in battlefields only that Mr Hardy shows his imaginative power , he is equally characteristic, equally sure, in drawing-rooms and debates, at a birth or a burial. The old House of Commons lives again under his hand Pitt and his fellow politicians denounce each other with the method and accent which belong to English party strife and to no other game ever played by man.

“ So now, to-night, in the slashing old sentences,  
Hear them speak, gravely these, those with light-hearted-  
ness,  
Midst their admonishments little conceiving how  
Scarlet the scroll that the years will unwind ”

Then for humour we have the birth of the King of Rome , for pathos deeper than death the visit of the doctors to the mad old king ; for heroism in rags the sergeant of the rearguard at Astorga ; for rustic drollery the Wessex men on Rainbarrow’s Beacon ; and for sheer horror the retreat from Moscow, the white mounds of snow along the wayside, and the camp-fires burning on long after those around them are all frozen “ stiff as horn ” One scene has a solemn music unlike any other—it is that in

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which we hear the poignantly familiar sentences of the burial service, mingled with the boom of the enemy's guns, over the grave of Sir John Moore at Coruña ; but there is a touch of the same sombre grandeur in the dirge of Albuera, in the lament for the dying army in Walcheren, and in the boatmen's wild chanty of the Trafalgar storm.

In short, the dramatist has made of us not only an audience, but the very theatre itself ; his play masters both sense and feeling. There remains only the appeal to the intellect—the ordered commentary or interpretation—and it is for this that the second effort of invention was required. The material nearest to hand was, of course, the Greek chorus, but it required great modification, and it has been suggested that in his experiment Mr. Hardy has owed much to Goethe or Shelley. Certainly he has something like a *Prologue in Heaven*, and in such lines as the following he echoes a rhythm of *Hellas* :

### " SEMICHORUS I.

Ere systemed suns were globed and lit  
The slaughters of the race were writ

### SEMICHORUS II.

And wasting wars, by land and sea,  
Fixed, like all else, immutably."

But what he has done belongs, in fact, not to Goethe or Shelley, nor even to the Greeks, but entirely to himself. He has throughout interwoven with the historical fabric of his drama the utterances of a company of "Phantom Intelligences," bearing the names of the Ancient Spirit of the Years, the Spirit of the Pities, the Spirits Sinister and Ironic, the Spirit of Rumour, the

Shade of the Earth, Spirit-messengers, and Recording Angels. They differ fundamentally from the Greek type of chorus in more ways than one. Not being persons visibly embodied in a visible play, they are not bound down by the appearance of human life, their comments are not narrowed by considerations of possibility or appropriateness, they remain poised above the scene, invisible, omnipresent, unconditioned. Further, while the Greek chorus represented in its comments "first, the national spirit, next, the universal sympathy of human nature," and was therefore, "in a word, the spectator idealized," the new chorus represents the author alone, the "Intelligences" are certainly personified moods of the human mind in criticism, but they are moods of one and the same mind, taken all together they are the utterance of Mr Hardy's philosophy, of his reasoned verdict on the life of men, and his belief as to the working of the universe and the nature of its First Cause.

It is the author himself then who is with us throughout, annotating, criticizing, unifying the play. The conflict of his moods works out in the main as a struggle between two opposing lines of thought, one founded on scientific experience, and expressed by the Spirit of the Years, the other based on feeling, and uttered by the voice of the Pities. The creed professed under the influence of the former has two main tenets. The holder of it believes, first, in one "Immanent Will," the creator and director of all forms of life, the sole cause of characters, decisions, and events; and this belief is enforced in a very original and striking manner, once when we are shown a general view of Europe before the play begins, and five times afterwards at supreme moments

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of crisis At each of these moments " a new and penetrating light descends on the spectacle, enduing men and things with a seeming transparency " In this preternatural clearness " the controlling Immanent Will appears, as a brain-like network of currents and ejections, twitching, interpenetrating, entangling, and thrusting hither and thither the human forms " The theory is emphasized, not only in these special scenes, but throughout the drama All living things are but clockwork, set in motion by a mainspring beyond their knowledge or control , they do not *act* in any true sense of the word , they merely " click out " their allotted parts

Secondly, this " Will " is at the same time both active and unconscious, intelligent and motiveless.

" It works unconsciously, as heretofore,  
Eternal artistries in Circumstance,  
Whose patterns, wrought by rapt æsthetic rote,  
Seem in themselves Its single listless aim,  
And not their consequence "

Everything in man's history goes to show

" That like a knitter drowsed,  
Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness,  
The Will has woven with an absent heed  
Since life first was , and ever will so weave."

Again and again, by reproach rather than rebellion, and in words of the most pathetic beauty, the Pities are heard urging their appeal, their protest against the injustice of an order by which suffering is laid on men though free-will is denied them " Yea, yea, yea ! " they exclaim, " Why make Life debtor when it did not

buy ? ” To this eternal question, so often asked by human pain, the Spirit of the Years replies .

“ Nay, blame not ! For what judgment can ye blame ? . . .  
 The cognizance ye mourn, Life’s doom to feel,  
 If I report it meetly, came unmeant,  
 Emeiging with blind gropes from impercipience  
 By random sequence,—luckless tragic Chance,  
 If ye will call it so ”

To this, in the After-scene which closes the whole book, the Pities reply in turn with another question :

“ Thou arguest still the Inadvertent Mind.—  
 But even so, shall blankness be for aye ?  
 Men gained cognition with the flux of time,  
 And wherefore not the Force informing them,  
 When far-ranged æons past all fathoming  
 Shall have swung by, and stand as backward years ”

The Spirit of the Years has no new answer to give, and the Pities, after a magnificent repetition of the older world’s hymn to the All-powerful and All-good, ends with an outpouring of hope :

“ But—a stirring thrills the air  
 Like to sounds of joyance there,  
 That the rages  
 Of the ages

Shall be cancelled and deliverance offered from the darts  
 that were,  
 Consciousness the Will informing, till It fashion all things  
 fair ! ”

This is not the time to criticize, to ask Mr. Hardy why he has given the name of “ Will ” to that which never wills, or where he finds a place for “ Chance ” in his

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clockwork universe, or how man's evolution came to depart so far from evolutionary law as to result in the acquisition of an "unneeded" faculty. When a man of genius formulates a system of theology in poetry, the poetry is apt to survive the theology; *Paradise Lost* is an instance in point, and *The Dynasts* is not likely to prove an exception. But I do not care to imagine a time when Englishmen will not read this poem with delight, and value it among their great possessions; nor do I believe that there will be wanting a succession of younger adventurers to set sail for the Eldorado from which Mr. Hardy has brought back so rich a treasure.



## 8. A MODERN UTOPIA

IT was said by a wit no longer among us, that our maps of the world are of little use, for they all omit the country of Utopia, where Humanity is for ever landing. Certainly that voyage has been often made, and crowds have listened eagerly to every tale of it; but there are always many of the contrary opinion. In Utopia there is generally too much poetry for the practical man, and too much prose for the poetically minded. Women are apt to find there much that is tedious, and some notions that are intolerably masculine. In a woman's ideal city there will never be any one to propose a community of nurseries; the town clerk may, perhaps, order the universal dinner, the medical officer may conceivably design the statutory dress; but any attempt by the local authority to take over all children from the month will certainly be resisted at the barricades.

Alone then, as a rule, the male traveller embarks for these islands; and though he too finds difficulties and disappointments in plenty, yet he is more than compensated by the hopefulness he learns there, and by the intimacy of those who conduct him with so much courage and so endearing a simplicity. For all the great explorers of Utopia have had the charm of earnestness; they write in many styles, not always of the best, they

are sometimes prolix, sometimes unduly brief, one is dull and another witty; but they are all alike self-forgetful and intent upon the matter in hand. It is a great matter too; their faith is involved, and in the service of the cause, as they conceive it, they have acquired something of the highmindedness of the Utopians, something of the manners of the future.

It is greatly to be hoped that this may be as true in coming times as in the past; for however thoroughly we may have explored the world as it is, there can never be an end of voyaging in the world as it is to be. In every new generation, that is, in every generation of thought, man will need a fresh Utopia. In our own time no less than three notable ones have been discovered; two of them almost simultaneously, by Edward Bellamy and William Morris. The last of the three was described by Mr W. D. Howells in *A Traveller from Altruria*, more than ten years ago, and we have the "Wanderlust" upon us again. But in these ten years we have grown a good deal, and it is no narrow island, no hurried visit, that will satisfy us now. Happily Mr. Wells, who offers to conduct us, is aware of this, he promises nothing less than a new world, and he is prepared to spend more time and trouble upon the journey than any guide since Plato.

Let us say at once that we are glad to have fallen into such good hands. Mr. Wells has all the necessary qualifications for his task, though he cannot be said to have them all in the same degree; he falls short of one of his predecessors in this excellence, and of another in that, yet in some respects he is undoubtedly first, and in none does he fail so completely as each of them has somewhere failed. In the logical completeness of

his survey he easily surpasses them all, including the Athenian father of the rest. In other respects he is as good a Platonist as need be ; he could not be more severe with Aristotle if he had been a Balliol scholar and kept his diary in Greek. It is clear that by some, at any rate, the "most pellucid air" of antiquity may be effectively breathed in a translation, and we may hope that Mr Wells's example will be widely followed. From Plato he has borrowed some notable ideas, including the institution of a ruling class of "Guardians"; but it must be added that even in this borrowing he has shown marked originality, and that he rather resembles than follows his greatest master in the width and clearness of his view and the fervour of his intellectual temperament. As a writer of English he lacks the certain touch of More or of Morris, and he is not studious to charm the ear ; he has nothing like the memorable quaintness of Bacon's *New Atlantis* or the ordered eloquence of Harrington's *Oceana*. But he is superior to the rest, and as his style is the true child of himself and his subject, and is still of an age to learn, he may yet rival those whom he will certainly never imitate. He does not attempt, like Cabet in his *Voyage en Icarie* and Bellamy in *Looking Backward*, to carve an elaborate frame of narrative for his theories ; but he surpasses all his predecessors except Plato in the ingenuity with which he contrives to throw upon his work the changing light of different personalities. If he knows little of the artistic passion which gave us *News from Nowhere*, he has another quality in which Morris was deficient, a sly humour worthy at times of the author of *Utopia* himself ; a "wittie subtiltie" for those who think with him, and here and there in a footnote "a privie nippe for them that do

otherwise " It is a pity that he has not More's freedom from professional bias or class prejudice, but he has much of Bacon's fervent belief in science and its effect on human life, with some of Mr. Howells' deeper enthusiasm for experiment in service and self-sacrifice

Above all—and this is a point of much interest to us, though possibly of very little to himself—Mr Wells is a pure-brained Anglo-Saxon, an Englishman from the bottom of his soul to the tip of his pen. Even when he is rebuking us for our shortcomings he is often himself exemplifying one or another of our most evident foibles. Artistic feeling is only too likely to be classed by him among undesirable weaknesses, and while he proclaims somewhat positively that "the formulæ and organization" of Protestantism "wax old like a garment," he himself reproduces all "that moral austerity—that touch of contempt for the unsubstantial æsthetic" by which it has "played a noble part in the history of the world"; so that rulers must be forbidden "the religion of dramatically lit altars, organ music, and incense," as indulgences too dangerous even in a social order which allows "group-marriages" and all kinds of terminable unions. Other inborn prejudices there are which Mr. Wells has creditably subdued, though they were confessedly part of his inheritance; he has but lately schooled himself to bear the idea of equal fellowship with the black and yellow races in the world of the future, he is still intolerant nearer home, and would take a short way with the whole of the idle, drunken, and criminal classes. He has, in fact, all our national Puritanism, his noble rulers are to be as athletic as the Alpine Club and more ascetic than John Milton, for they will do their annual climbing without guides, and as for the delights

of wine and other "small pleasures," they must spare to interpose them altogether. War Mr. Wells intends mankind to do without, but it is only a few years ago that he took a very healthy and intelligent interest in it, and there remains in his fine conception of the "Samurai" or Governing Order a striking survival of the chivalrous spirit of our ancestors. We have said enough to show that a typical combination of stern common sense and glowing idealism, of an exacting love of truth and a profound religious instinct, gives at least a fair prospect to those who are willing to embark with him; from Sir Thomas More downward, men of English blood have excelled all others as Utopists, and they have done so in virtue of the character and traditions which Mr. Wells possesses in common with them.

In one respect, however, he stands entirely apart. He is not only of our race but of our generation, the age of science, patient, tentative, and universal. It was by no sudden and confident descent that he reached Utopia, but only at the fourth attempt. We should lose much if we took no account of his preliminary voyages. These began in 1902 with the publication of his volume of *Anticipations*, an original and very interesting forecast of probable developments during the coming century. He begins by dissociating himself, upon the first page, from those whose object or method has been to declaim against tendencies rather than to observe them. He avoids the form of fiction and resists "the provocation of the satirical opportunity"—except on one occasion, when he relapses so far as to caricature Mr. Gladstone and another present-day statesman. On the whole, however, he is true to his resolution and to his character of Utopist-in-the-making; for satires are

not ideals, and even Butler's *Erewhon*, even the matchless *Travels of Gulliver*, cannot claim a place among Utopias. The *Anticipations* begin characteristically with a chapter on Locomotion in the Twentieth Century. Railways, improved railways, elevated railways, railways without rails, motor-cars and more motor-cars, motor-cars for the million, motor-cars on "specialized high-speed roads" with guide-rails—a discourse on these, with a footnote on "the coming invention of flying," could not fail to captivate an English audience at the outset. These things are, however, as the author says, only the background and the fittings—the scene before the play. The play itself begins when we come to trace the results of all this more rapid and easy locomotion. "The general distribution of population in a country must always be directly dependent on transport facilities." And again, "the determining factor in the appearance of great cities in the past, and indeed up to the present day, has been the meeting of two or more transit lines, the confluence of two or more streams of trade, and easy communication." These are facts, and old facts, but when Mr. Wells touches them they become premisses, causes, fertile seeds of change. The centripetal influences which have made every great town into a kind of irresistible whirlpool are now about to lose their power, the tendency is towards centrifugal movement and the segregation of groups, drawn together by similarity of beliefs and tastes, and by antipathy, it might be added, to other groups with other beliefs and tastes. So there will be in an England which Mr. Wells draws with some picturesqueness, cottage suburbs, villa suburbs, manorial suburbs, smart, smug, gardening, golfing, racing, and rowing

suburbs, specialized beyond our present experience and dotted all over the country between the cathedral towns and other old centres. Little is said of segregation on the deeper grounds ; but we gather that the Protestant will no longer sit down with the priest, nor the young Radical play tennis with the Primrose dame ; only birds of the same feather will be found roosting in the same tree. "Certain Social Reactions" will result. One of the new classes which are fast superseding the old order of "gentle and simple" is the "shareholding class," a body of irresponsible independent and wealthy people, who feel the urgency of no exertion, the pressure of no specific duties. It is a class by nature unfitted for co-operative defensive action, but in default of some modifying social force it is certain, Mr Wells thinks, to be still present a hundred years hence. He is temperate in his account of it, but he finds eventually, when he reaches Utopia, that he can no longer tolerate the inheritance of "safe investments." The vices of a shareholding class must include the hampering of honesty and originality in the arts, of which it is the sole patron, and the deterioration of women's ideals by the prizes which it is able to offer to the more adventurous among them. For our comfort we are at the same time promised the growth and eventual cohesion of a new class of "educated and intelligent efficient", a most important element, since it will spring up partly from among the shareholders themselves and will supply the only force capable of imposing any vital change upon the social mechanism. One such change must be the prevention of the multiplication of the Unfit, the removal of the present class of unemployed and unemployable. Our old social order, in Mr Wells's

view, has now melted and mingled into "a vast intricate confusion of different sorts of people, some sailing about upon floating masses of irresponsible property, some buoyed by smaller fragments, some clinging desperately enough to insignificant atoms, a great and varied multitude swimming successfully without aid, or with an amount of aid that is negligible in relation to their own efforts, and an equally varied multitude of less capable ones clinging to the swimmers, clinging to the floating rich, or clutching empty-handed and thrust and sinking down," and this will soon be the typical aspect of all civilized societies. The description is a much juster and more subtle one than Mr. Bellamy's well-known picture of the coach on which the fortunate travellers who have for the time secured seats are dragged along, callous, remorseful, or apprehensive, by the envious and miserable poor. It gives the economic aspect of a process which Mr. Wells sees to be going on in every direction, "a world-wide process of social and moral delinquency." He wastes no time in lamenting it; it is producing at present a variety of types and ideals so mingled that they give, as mingled colours do, a general effect of grayness—"the Government of the Gray" is Mr. Wells's phrase for Democracy, which he criticizes from the standpoint of one to whom it represents "the mere emptiness and disorder of the general mind." But the outcome of it all will be, he thinks, a birth of power; not a one-man power, but "the steady development of a new and quite unprecedented educated class as a necessary aspect of the expansion of science and mechanism"; a class composed apparently to a large extent of doctors and engineers, scientific and disciplined people capable first of conducting modern



war, and finally, at some more distant period, of bringing about "the Larger Synthesis"—the establishment of one World-State at peace within itself. In this part of his discourse Mr. Wells shows an interest in war and foreign relations, and a grasp of both subjects, which are typical of the greatest political nation in Europe, and amusingly out of key with the ideal state on the highroad to which they are conducting us. He concludes with a chapter on the "Faith, Morals, and Public Policy of the New Republic." It is more positive than final, but speculation so courageous and well-mannered can bring no shame to its author even when he has outgrown a good deal of it. "Quite inevitably," says Mr. Wells, and this opinion he retains, "the predominant men of the new time will be religious men." But he uses the word in a strict sense of his own. "Being themselves, as by the nature of the forces that have selected them they will certainly be, men of will and purpose, they will be disposed to find, and consequently they will find, an effect of purpose in the totality of things." They will take a share in the eternal process, and aim at harmony with the universal will, for any further or more intimate seeking after God. Mr. Wells has nothing but stern reproof. He has not yet applied his scientific methods to an inquiry into the facts of religious experience, though he has thought enough on such matters to be reasonably dissatisfied with Christianity as it is often preached. His forecast of morals is even less orthodox. The men of the New Republic will favour "the modest suicide of incurably melancholy or diseased or helpless persons"; they will extend the use of capital punishment—by narcotics—and they will regard the sexual relation as

no more sacramental than a game of golf, with which, if we dissociate it from questions of offspring, it is "entirely on all fours" For the Unfit they will have "little pity and less benevolence." And the coloured races, "who do not come into the new needs of efficiency? Well, the world is a world, not a charitable institution, and they will have to go." On the other side, it must be admitted that the new moral sanction—the welfare of the coming race—is evidently to Mr Wells as binding as any known to influence men, and if the religion he anticipates is vague and impersonal, it is none the less a pure and inspiring one. "By faith we disbelieve" is its watchword, and the world has long needed such a battle-cry against the superstitious and the persecutor

This brief sketch can give no idea of the unflagging interest and originality of *Anticipations*, it passes over many stimulating topics on which the author shows that if his views are novel it is not for lack of reading; indeed, width rather than depth is his quality. What we have noted are certain milestones on the road which we must take if we are to arrive at an understanding of Mr. Wells or his Utopia. We go beyond them as he has gone beyond them. The book, he says himself, "would stand a vast amount of controversial footnoting . . . it is written to provoke" He reminds us here of Harrington's saying that "Truth is a spark to which objections are like bellows"; and conveniently forgets his own first page, where he told us that "Necessarily diffidence will be one of the graces of the performance." But if there is not diffidence, there are other graces, seriousness and courtesy; forgotten once, when public schools and headmasters are glanced at; but here

Mr. Wells draws from a long inexperience and speaks more in anger than in earnest. The book as a whole is remarkable for its combined frankness and freedom from offence. We leave it with an impression of the author as a pleasant and stimulating companion possessed by two main ideas; a preference for the future over the past as a source of inspiration, and a belief that human character is mainly the product of environment. When we meet him again, however his mental physiognomy may have changed, we may be sure of recognizing these two features at least they are the eyes through which he looks out upon the world.

We do, in fact, find them again in his two succeeding books. The first of these, *The Discovery of the Future*, was originally delivered as a lecture, and might be still more appropriately described as a sermon, for it is pitched in the key of faith, and is more eloquent than convincing. It begins by distinguishing two divergent types of mind: the retrospective, legal, or submissive type, which "interprets the things of the present, and gives value to this and denies it to that, entirely with relation to the past," and the constructive, legislative, creative, organizing or masterful type, which sees the world as one great workshop and the present as "no more than material for the future." The reason why the former is and has always been the predominant type is obvious. "All people believe the past is certain, defined, and knowable, and only a few people believe that it is possible to know anything about the future." This, however, is, in Mr. Wells's view, only the belief of "a mind without an imagination trained in scientific habits of thought"; as one assimilates the broad conceptions of science one becomes persuaded "that the

adequacy of causation is universal," that the future being in reality just as fixed and inevitable as the past, is also "just as possible a matter of knowledge" What we know of the past is derived from three sources. records of personal memory—a small and not entirely trustworthy class, records of history and tradition—a larger but less trustworthy class, records of the non-historical, geological or astronomical past—scantier, but wider in range and generally admitted to be beyond question This non-historical past has come to us through "a new and keener habit of inquiry and no sort of revelation", it may be fitly named the "Inductive Past" If, then, we spend an equal amount of labour upon the search for operating causes, we may be able to throw a searchlight of inference forward instead of backward, and attain a knowledge of the Inductive Future "as clear, as universally convincing and infinitely more important" Man, with his conscious and incalculable will, seems to introduce an uncertain element; but even man "works out" if taken in the mass Heroes and hero-worship do not exist for Mr Wells: he believes that "if Julius Cæsar, Napoleon, Edward IV, William the Conqueror, Lord Rosebery, and Robert Burns had all been changed at birth, it would not have produced any serious dislocation of the course of Destiny" Mr Hardy in *The Dynasts* has said much the same thing in a vast and sombre manner of his own. He showed us nations as ant-heaps and navies as moths, but the great men he meant to take away he gave back to us in great literature. Mr. Wells, with his face towards the Inductive Future, perceives that "man and all the world of men is no more than the present phase of a development so great and

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splendid that, beside this vision, epics jingle like nursery rhymes and all the exploits of Humanity shrivel to the proportion of castles in the sand " Man—even the efficient man of the coming world-state—is not final, beyond him are the beings who will inhabit " the uplands of the future " still more gracious and splendid than anything we can either hope or imagine " This is the purpose of the Will, and we must work to further it

Our interest and sympathy would not suffer us to interrupt Mr. Wells in such a vein; we dread and deprecate the merely conservative view of the past as strongly as he does But the ordinary man may surely reply, without being " legal " or " submissive," that he is " retrospective " because there is a real difference between our knowledge of the past and of the future It is one thing to be given a result and trace it back to the main ancestral cause which it implies, it is quite another to take a cause and speculate on what progeny its line may produce in the distant future when the descent has been complicated by crossing with a thousand or a million other strains, most of them unforeseen. A man may know a good deal about his ancestors, but he cannot foretell his grandchildren's characteristics, even if he can guess who is to be his daughter-in-law, because he is not as intimate with her family history as with his own To know all would be to foreknow all the rest, but the number of operating causes is infinite, and infinite knowledge is not to be had or co-ordinated even by scientific man The field of astronomy—the most exact and positive of the sciences—is strewn with the wrecks of deflected planets and comets that never returned, or returned only as showers of meteorites. The past was at any rate once

actual, the future remains largely hypothetical, and to the practical man a dead dog will always be more real than a hypothetical lion, and a fossilized fish more lifelike than a whole race of Inductive demigods. As for the masterful processes of constructive organization and legislation, a man may be—we wish that all men were—as determined as Mr Wells to improve on the past, but may still, whether for guidance or warning, prefer it to a possibility upon a possibility ten times removed

There is a further consideration which helps to give the past “its enormous predominance in our thoughts.” Among the possibilities of the future is always the possibility that there may be no future. Mr. Wells is desperately awake to this. He admits that he cannot show “why certain things should not destroy and end the entire human race and story; why night should not come down and make all our dreams and efforts vain.” He rules out this possibility by an act of faith, “it is not unreasonable that for fundamental beliefs we must go outside the sphere of reason and set our feet upon Faith.” But then the new sanction—the welfare of the future—is no more scientific than the old ones. We could no longer work—it is Mr Wells who says it—in harmony with the Universal Will if that Will were possibly intending to blow Humanity out like the flame of a candle. The more scientific religion, however, would clearly be that which should accept all conceivable intentions of the Universal Will, annihilation included, which should, in fact, aim at a state of harmony with God’s nature rather than God’s supposed purpose, and there is an end of the theology of *Anticipations*. But the loss is no loss; Utopia, when we reach it, will

be the more tolerant for this fiasco and less in peril of a "reign of the Saints"

This hope is realized at the very outset of Mr Wells's next volume, *Mankind in the Making*, a book which the author wishes to be regarded, together with the two preceding ones, as "An Essay in Presentation" What is presented is not a Utopia, but it is a series of contributions towards a Utopia The first step is the proposal of a formula of citizenship, a bond of co-operative union, for the New Republic or transition state which has been germinating in Mr Wells's mind The formula is the one we have heard already; the New Republicans are those who desire and endeavour "to leave the world better than they found it." But this is no longer the sole definition and test of religion. We are to discuss practical measures, and it is now admitted that "these questions appear to be on a different plane from religion and religious discussion; they look outward, while essentially religion looks inward to the soul, and given the necessary temperament, it is possible to approach them in an unbiassed manner from almost any starting-point of religious profession" This is a very different way of putting the case. if once our outward life is admitted to be only one-half of our being, no one can have any objection to accepting Mr Wells's formula, "practical" life has always been conducted upon a working hypothesis of some kind, and men of all creeds may well unite in adopting this one. Catholics or Calvinists, Positivists or Parsees, "they may derive their ultimate motions and sanctions from the most various sources, they may worship in the most contrasted temples, and yet meet unanimously in the market-place" with a belief that the human race is intended to continue

and to raise itself, and with a desire to organize their political and social action on that basis. Mr Wells, we observe, continues to speak here and there as if he, for his part, adopted the opinion that man's existence is limited to birth, reproduction, and death, that he is "only the transitory guardian of an undying gift of life." Some of us would omit the word "only," but we may all agree that too often personal religion has been "an over-accentuation of man's egoistic individuality," and we may even join in regretting that "the whole literature the world produced, until the nineteenth century had well progressed, must needs be lacking in any definite and pervading sense of the cardinal importance in the world of this central reproductive aspect." Our regret is tempered, however, by a reflection which has happily occurred to Mr. Wells too, that Love, the hero of the poetic arts, has for all his thoughtless egoistic babble been half consciously thinking from time immemorial of this same central aspect, and has seldom undervalued its importance. Moreover, there is, by hypothesis, plenty of time for the poets of the New Republic. Mr. Meredith has already reminded us that we may regard not only our spiritual but our physical and social lives as faithful service in the march of humanity, which like an army "issues out of wilderness With battle plucking round its ragged flanks." Others are following; but Mr. Wells must not insist on a too exclusive devotion of literature to this one subject, or we shall end in a sort of Darwinian militarism, and be flooded with Evolutionary Barrack-Room Ballads.

On the more practical side, what will be, from the common point of view, the main concern of our new society? "Births and the training and preparation



for future births," says Mr Wells, and he means it as Harrington would have meant it " ' Give us good men and they will make us good Laws,' is the Maxim of a Demagog, and is (through the alteration which is commonly perceivable in men when they have power to work their wills) exceedingly fallible But ' Give us good Orders and they will make us good men ' is the Maxim of a Legislator, and the most infallible in the Politicks." Mr. Wells is a legislator to the backbone, perhaps a little too much of one at times, as, for instance, when he moves an adjournment to call attention to the monarchy in England We are only too well aware of the shams and subserviencies, to say nothing of other evils, which often gather round kings, but there is another side to the question, and Mr Wells, with a curious want of penetration, chooses just that side which is least vulnerable for his attack To argue that such ceremonies as the Coronation Service are " entirely irrelevant to the purpose and honour of our race " is merely to avow a personal blindness, to forget the true position of the monarchy as the historic symbol of national greatness and the central expression of national aspiration Whatever those near the king may feel (and as to this we cannot accept Mr. Wells's " private conversations " as evidence), the mass of the nation kneels to no man as man, but to the outward sign of memories and hopes that are greater than themselves In any case what base impulses there are among us would not be destroyed by abolishing the monarchy, nor indeed by handing over the peerage to be elected by special juries. These are mechanical devices for changing national character constitution-pies too carefully kneaded and cooked We are tempted to exclaim with

a seventeenth-century critic, "Who has taught you to cast away Passion, an't please you, like the Bran, and work up Reason as pure as the Flower of your Cake? Are you acquainted with the Author of *Oceana*, that has seen Foreign Countries, convers'd with the Speculativ<sup>i</sup>, learn'd of the most Serene Lady *Venetia* to work with Bobbins, makes you a Magistracy like a Pippin Py, and sells Butter-prints with S P Q R.? Have done, I say, will you vy that green in your Cheeks with the purple of the State? Come, when I live to see Machiavel in puff paste, a Commonwealth come out of a Bake-house, where Smocks were the Boulters, let me be a Mil-horse "

But there remain two lines along which legislation may be pushed with hope of good results. Mr Wells's proposals for improving the health and vital standard of children are admirable both for what they do and what they do not include. He would aim at a real economy, and a real "equality of opportunity", at giving every child born a fair chance of growing into "a proud ambitious clean-handed and capable man." On the other hand he meddles neither with such "ugly superstitions" as the belief in hereditary drunkenness and crime, nor with such beautiful chimeras as the prize-dog theory of marriage, he answers Galton and annihilates Nordau. In the second and more important line he is even stronger. The beginnings of mind and language, families and social ideals, religious education, the cultivation of the imagination, the organization of the higher education, thought in the modern state—these are dealt with in brilliant and suggestive chapters on which we have scarcely any criticism to pass. Mr. Wells turns a deaf ear to much

present-day quacking and hissing ; science teaching, he says frankly, is often " a very undesirable encumbrance of the curriculum " because it does not open up " the tremendous vistas and implications of modern science," but has for its object the service of a hasty commercialism, and for its method " an arid misuse of memory " Thought, criticism, literature—" an abundant and almost universally influential contemporary literature " —these he takes for the true means of overcoming the isolation of men and classes and nations , of securing that " widening of the range of intercourse " which is education as he defines it. He underestimates the value of the classical languages for this purpose—they are something more than keys to a storehouse which has long been ransacked—but he is sound and eloquent on the one cardinal point. The thought of any community is its life ; as its thought is weak or strong, collected or fragmentary, so must its life be " Though that community have cities, such as the world has never seen before, fleets and hosts and glories, though it count its soldiers by the army corps and its children by the million, yet if it hold not to the reality of thought and formulated will beneath these outward things, it will pass, and all its glories will pass, like smoke before the wind, like mist beneath the sun , it will become at last only one more vague and fading dream upon the scroll of time, a heap of mounds and pointless history, even as are Babylon and Nineveh " A legislator with this belief will hardly be for long the victim of mechanical theories.

But now it is time to leave these forecasts of the world of to-morrow and set out on the long trail, the final voyage to Utopia. How will Mr. Wells convey his

fellow-travellers there ? By ship or submarine, automobile or aeroplane ? We could not tell this secret if we would , no more subtle spiriting was ever done ; you will look in vain through the tales of Mr Wells's predecessors, and, indeed, through his own scientific romances, for anything like the ease and ingenuity with which you are transported to the planet " out beyond Sirius, far in the deeps of space, beyond the flight of a cannon-ball flying for a billion years . . . It is a planet like our planet, the same continents, the same islands, the same oceans and seas . . . even to the meanest pond weed or the remotest Alpine blossom " The resemblance does not end there, but every man, woman, and child alive in our world has in the other a Utopian parallel : a brilliant postulate this, that seems to soar upwards with a swift, startling rush and scatter a train of glittering points above us " For example, we must assume that there is a man such as I might have been, better informed, better disciplined, better employed [ ' O wittie head ! ' cries the ghost of More ], thinner, and more active—and I wonder what he is doing !—and you, sir or madam, are in duplicate also, and all the men and women that you know and I " There are few among those who think at all to whom the book of " Might-have-been ; or How they met themselves," would not be one of terrible fascination. It is under this haunting spell that we pass down into Utopia by the Lake of Lucendro.

We go revolving many memories Of our older friends, Bensalemites, Icarians, Altrurians, and the rest, we used to ask three questions , and not one of them ever answered all three to any purpose. What is the ideal State ? All of them have spent their best en-

deavours on that ; but, unless these visions are to be frankly mere cloud-commonwealths, too unsubstantial for the Western mind, too fanciful for men in earnest, there is no less urgent a necessity to answer the other two ; how may your ideal be reached, and how maintained ? Such inquiries are not curious or unreasonable ; they try the city to its foundations ; if these are not laid upon a rock theory of human life, and the walls bonded with a cement of tried coherence, the stability of the whole will be a dangerous illusion. Plato laughed, and demanded for his starting-point a miracle : somewhere philosophers must acquire the kingly power, or those who are now called kings and potentates must become imbued with a sufficient measure of genuine philosophy. Only so could The Republic be founded : the hope still seems, as it seemed to Glaucon, absurd enough to invite immediate attack from large numbers of assailants, throwing off their upper garments. Sir Thomas More, in his turn, after telling us that " schole philosophye in the consultations of Princes hath no place " and that " you must not labour to dryve into their heades newe and strange informations whyche you knowe wel shal-be nothing regarded wyth them," nevertheless goes on to relate gravely the coming of King Utopus, who by conquest " broughte the rude and wild people to that excellent perfection wherein they nowe goe beyond all the people of the world." New Atlantis, too, received its laws from Solamona, a king who " had a large heart inscrutable for good, and was wholly bent to make his kingdom and people happy " ; and its religion from a bible and a manuscript epistle, miraculously sent in an ark by the Apostle Bartholomew. Oceana was founded by a replica of Oliver Cromwell ;

Icaria by a *chef des révoltés* named Icar, who, after refusing the titles of Dictator and President, proposed and carried in a unanimous Constituent Assembly the institution of a communal society. The vote taken on this occasion was more critical than Cabet realized ; for the world by then was leaving behind dictators and kings, and since his time all ideal republics, whether in Altruria, Boston, or Nowhere, have been finally established, after violent struggles, by the simple process of wisdom going to the poll in overwhelming force. This sounds more plausible than Plato's combination of royalty and philosophy, only because we have not yet learned to distinguish between the great sedative power of the suffrage and its small initiative force. Mr Wells is wiser. he realizes the passivity of the many as clearly as the impotence of the old Parliamentary hand or the raging propagandist, and works his great regenerative movement by means of a new class of educated and determined men such as he has already foreshadowed. They rose, he says, under more favourable conditions than any known to us ; for in the Utopian planet the seeds sown by the prophets and founders of great religions had fallen upon more fertile soil, wars had swept aside obstructions and centres of decay ; prejudices had been tempered to an ordered criticism, and hatreds merged in tolerant reactions. They rose "in the course of social and political troubles and complications analogous to those of our own time on earth," but they had none of our "hasty despair of specialization for government," or of "that curious disregard of the fund of enthusiasm and self-sacrifice in men which is the fundamental weakness of worldly economics." They knew that man's desire is to serve as well as to

eat, and instead of wasting this fund of "impersonal energy" upon religious and political misunderstandings and conflicts, and, we may add, upon chaotic charitable enterprises, they deliberately organized a society which organized the World State of Utopia. This society was, of course, a revolutionary one. It began, perhaps, with research and discussion of a Fabian character, but as it gathered strength "it must have assumed a more militant organization. . . . Traces of that militancy would therefore pervade it still, and a campaigning quality . . . still remain as its essential quality." For such a body of men there was only one possible name: Mr Wells has called them "the Order of the 'Samurai'."

When we have said that this outline of a process of world-reform is not completely incredible, we have said all that Mr Wells can ask, and more than we could say of any other Utopian history. He comes even better out of a comparative inquiry into the permanent quality of different ideal States. Plato professed to believe that perfection once gained would be easily kept. "If a State has once started well, it exhibits a kind of circular progress in its growth. Adherence to a good system of nurture and education creates good natures, and good natures, receiving the assistance of a good education, grow still better than they were." Fortified by this amazing logic he demands from his Guardians, as their chief duty, a rigid conservatism, the "principle, I mean, which forbids any innovation, in either gymnastic or music, upon the established order, requiring it, on the contrary, to be most strictly maintained," for fear lest any novelty should creep in even in amusements or manners: the territorial growth of the State must

also be restricted Adeimantus might well protest that the enforcing of this régime would not make the Guardians "particularly happy" they could take no part in the ordinary pleasures or activities of men, but "appear to be posted in the city precisely like mercenary troops, wholly occupied in garrison duties." More's Commonwealth, too, was gifted with a lightly assumed immortality; "for, seying the chief causes of ambition and sedition, with other vices, be plucked up by the rootes and abandoned at home, there can be no jeopardie of domistickall dissention," and consequently no fear of foreign overthrow. Bacon's King Solamona, in order "to give perpetuity to that which was in his own time so happily established," thought it only necessary to ordain "interdicts and prohibitions" of the nature of a drastic Aliens Bill.

The remaining Utopists seem to have thought little of the question, with the single exception of Harrington, upon whom it naturally forced itself as one of the problems of that "balance" which was for him the solution of all difficulties. Rejecting anything like Plato's limitation of the size of his Republic, he says proudly of Oceana, "A Government of this make is a Commonwealth for Increase. Of those for Preservation, the Inconveniencies and Frailties have been shewn: their roots are narrow, such as do not run, have no Fibers, their Tops weak and dangerously exposed to the weather; except you chance to find one, as Venice, planted in a Flower-pot; and if she grows she grows top-heavy, and falls too But you cannot plant an Oak in a Flower-pot she must have Earth for her Root and Heaven for her Branches. '*Imperium Oceano, famam quæ terminet astris.*'" He therefore



provides for possible expansion, and puts into the mouth of his Archon this statement of the general principle on which he relies "If there be a contradiction or inequality in your Commonwealth, it must fall: but if it has neither of them, it has no principle of mortality. Do not think me impudent. if this be truth I should commit a gross indiscretion in concealing it. Sure I am that Machiavel is for the immortality of a Commonwealth upon far weaker principles 'If a Commonwealth,' says he, 'were so happy as to be provided often with men, that when she is swerving from her Principles, should reduce her to her Institution, she would be immortal'" The chief "contradictions or inequalities" feared by Harrington were political ones, and such as might arise from an inexpedient distribution of landed property. Mr Wells's survey is not only wider but deeper. He sees the life-history of states as an alternation of unstable liberalism with efficient conservatism; an antagonism, more or less unintentional, between the poietic or creative type of man and the kinetic, vigorous, and expansive. The first builds, the second develops. the statesman is followed by the politician, the original genius by the scholar: as its organization becomes settled and efficient the State loses its poietic activity, its power of adaptation lessens, until through revolution or defeat there comes a fresh release of poietic force. The problem is to avoid these alternate collapses, to carry on poietic activity without a break, as the most important element in human society, but since it is insusceptible of organization, to carry it on in the form of free, individual development. This is to be achieved partly by leaving to every citizen, over and above the time spent by him

in direct education or in earning the minimum wage, "a marginal free leisure with opportunities for developing idiosyncrasies": and partly by supplying incentives—honours and privileges for poetic men and women who distinguish themselves in science, invention, literature or other pursuits. Progress will always be going on, but it will neither be a barren "circular progress" nor a progress along a number of unrelated lines; under the imperceptible outside pressure of the governing class it will rather resemble a spiral in its persistent and yet rhythmical onward movement.

Mr Wells has expended a great deal of scientific analysis upon this theory, so much that he sees not only the possibilities but the difficulties of his own scheme. It contains what Harrington would call "a contradiction." The governing classes, in whom is vested all political power, who are the only administrators, lawyers, doctors and public officials, who furnish from one-half to nine-tenths of the legislative assembly and the whole of the electoral body, are practically all "efficients," men of the kinetic type, employed in kinetic activities. If their perpetual function of directing, stimulating, and possibly restraining the activities of their more poetic fellows is to be discharged without too much friction and with the good result which is to save the State from decay, they must have at their command an insight and an intelligent sympathy of which we have on earth little experience. They may be as practical, as scientific, and as efficient as an English House of Commons, but they must measure the arts by some other standard than that which only places the painter above the poet because he does, after all, produce something real. This is no small

difficulty, for it arises precisely out of the fundamental nature of the types into which Mr Wells has so acutely divided his citizens · his kinetic men will in this matter of the arts have, for all their good intentions, more affinity with those other terrible classes of his, the Base and the Dull They will themselves be never base, and seldom, perhaps, dull, but will they not be a little concrete in their view of progress, a little moral in their view of plastic art, apt to value literature for its content rather than its form, and to find in music nothing that is not mechanical? Does not Mr Wells betray an uneasy consciousness of this difficulty when he assures us that though "typically the 'Samurai' are engaged in administrative work," his own double, who is of course one of them, selects work which "is in its nature poetic"? Mr Wells of Utopia is employed in analysing the psychology of prison officials and criminals, in the interests of the latter, most of whom, it is to be feared, were born artists rather than legislators. He is, in fact, trying to run with the hares while professionally hunting with the hounds; and his remedy for the trouble we have suggested is that a hare who does not like being hunted can always become a hound "Any intelligent and efficient adult may become one of the 'Samurai' and take a hand in the universal control" We fear that there are but few among the really poetic who possess the completely ambidextrous nature exemplified by Mr. Wells of Utopia.

Let us consider for a moment what it is to become one of the "Samurai." We know all about them, for their creator, realizing that they "form the real body of the State," that by them his world was built, and with them must stand or fall, has spent much care upon the

statutes of the Order. "The Rule consists of three parts there is the list of things that qualify, the list of things that must not be done, and the list of things that must be done" The candidate for the "Samurai" must have passed a satisfactory examination at the end of his college course, to show not only his intelligence but his self-control and steadiness of purpose. He must nominally possess a "Technique"—the qualification for some profession; and he must have a satisfactory knowledge of the two "Canons" which form the "Book of the 'Samurai.'" He must be at least twenty-five years old and in sound health and good training. His past is not inquired into; but for any breach of the Rule after once joining it the penalty is irrevocable expulsion. He may not lend money at interest, keep a hotel, sell drugs, act, sing, or recite (though he may "lecture authoritatively"); he may not be a servant or keep one; he must shave, dress, and tend himself and no one else; he may not bet, gamble, play games in public or watch them being played, he must abjure wine and tobacco, and be chaste, though not celibate. "A man under the Rule who loves a woman who does not follow it must either leave the 'Samurai' to marry her, or induce her to accept what is called the Woman's Rule, which, while it excepts her from the severer qualifications and disciplines, brings her regimen of life into a working harmony with his." (The Rule is "never fussy," but it insists on sumptuary laws for dress) On the other hand, a woman "Samurai" may marry outside the Rule, and a wife may join it without the husband doing so. This concession is valued, as we should expect, by "men of great poetical distinction." The children of these marriages tend to become "Samu-

rai" themselves, and so to form something of a hereditary class; but it is not a caste, for it is not exclusive, and constantly increases relatively to the total population. It may some day be co-extensive with mankind.

Lastly, the religion of the "Samurai" is explained: "the will and motives at the centre that made men and women ready to undergo . . . to renounce . . . to keep in the key of effort." They start, somewhat unnecessarily, by repudiating the doctrine of Original Sin. They go on, reasonably enough, to assert that "man, on the whole, is good." He has pride and conscience, remorse and sorrow, he is inevitably religious. But the "Samurai" allow no "slovenly indulgence in religious inclinations"—a phrase which is fortunately explained as condemning "failure to think hard and discriminate as fairly as possible in religious matters," but unfortunately followed by a comparison of organ music and incense to "the love of painted women or the consolations of brandy," and of all creeds and formulæ to "the early gratifications of young men, experiences to establish renunciation." A little personal feeling has crept in here which has nothing to do with the "Samurai." They are essentially tolerant, allowing every man his own religion, "saturated with the philosophy of uniqueness"; they "hold God to be complex and of an endless variety of aspects, to be expressed by no universal formula nor approved in any uniform manner", "a transcendental and mystical God" "different in the measure of every man's individuality." In private a "Samurai" may feed his "secret religious life" with music and books of devotion, in public he is said to worship only by joint work and effort. Here we are reminded of More's union of "the life contemplative"

and "the life active," but the older Utopia retained the use of churches and public worship: it had priests (though "of exceeding holiness and therefore very few"), and services where men might in dim and doubtful light gather together their cogitations, and where, though their creeds were sundry and manifold, they might "agree together in the honour of the divine nature, as going divers ways to one end" Instead of the dim church the "Samurai" have a new and finely imagined provision for meditation: once in every year for seven days at a time each of them must go alone to "the high and lonely places of the world"; quiet resolute exiles, they climb or sail or march in the wilderness, and commune with the emptiness and the elemental forces. So there remains always "in the bearing and the faces of this Utopian chivalry, a faint persistent tinge of detachment from the immediate heats and hurries, the little graces and delights, the tensions and stimulations of the daily world." "It pleased me strangely," says Mr. Wells, and it pleases us too, "to think of this steadfast yearly pilgrimage of solitude, and how near men might come then to the high distances of God."

When we have reached a full understanding of the "Samurai" we have in reality come to an end of the modern Utopia: we have without a formal answer solved our remaining question, as to the constitution, machinery, and customs of the ideal State. These will be just what the "Samurai" choose to make them, and Mr. Wells has no more power than we have to dictate to his own mightier and wiser offspring. He may foretell, if he can, and we may believe, if we choose; but any attempt to dogmatize would only lead to abstract

argument, and for that we have Plato already Mr Wells is quite aware of this ; he knows that where the old Utopists built like children with a box of wooden bricks, he has been experimenting like an electrician, with eternal and immeasurable forces. The chapters, therefore, in which the Utopian life and institutions are touched upon are tentative, suggestive, and hypothetical rather than historical in form. Still they are well worth reading, and comparing with the older ideals, of which they supersede part, and part they repeat or recreate. Mr. Wells's World State owns all the land, the great local governments holding under it. It also owns all the sources of energy, develops and distributes water power, wind power, coal and electric power, maintains health, order, roads, cheap and rapid locomotion ; conveys and distributes goods and labour ; pays for and secures healthy births, subsidizes literature and research. But where almost all Utopian States have led the way it will not follow it stops short of absolute Communism. The individual has his freedoms and properties ; he is not to be the slave of a bureaucracy, for it is for him that the State itself exists. But neither may he enslave his fellow-man all servile and degrading labour is abolished, machinery and mechanical ingenuities make life equally easy for every one. The minimum wage is sufficient for a livelihood ; education is free from beginning to end. Marriage regulations are lax as between the partners themselves, strict in so far as they affect the children to be born. But they are not based upon a superstitious terror of heredity, and where there is no disability they introduce the sound principle of rewarding maternity as a profession and a public service. It is strange that no one has worked

out this idea since Bacon hinted at it in *New Atlantis*, where "they say the King is debtor to no man, but for the propagation of his subjects" The Unfit are dealt with sternly by Mr. Wells's Utopians; and drunkards, thieves, cheats, violent criminals, and persons with transmissible diseases are cut off by "a kind of social surgery" and segregated in islands of their own. We pause here for a moment and recall the milder folk of Nowhere "How could they look happy if they knew that their neighbours were shut up in prison, while they bore such things quietly?" How, indeed, would any Anglo-Saxon community submit to the transportation of their relatives, say for a seventh offence against sobriety? The question widens as we think of it: how far would they bow in general to the rule of these all-knowing, all-ordering, ever-present, hard, keen, remote, ascetic "Samurai", these Platonic Guardians in the white robe of the Knights Templars and the steel-and-leather caps of Cromwell's Ironsides? Would they not hate them as ill-conditioned lower boys hate the sixth-form monitors of an English Public School? "*Oderint dum metuant*," says Mr. Wells; the Base and Dull may hate them as they hate their own conscience, but the heterogeneous inefficient cannot rise against the efficient class. They can, however, rise into it; there is no gulf between rulers and ruled; Utopia is, in fact, what England is in theory, a democracy governing itself through an open aristocracy.

The "Samurai," then, are Mr. Wells's contribution to our Utopian knowledge, our Inductive Future Like his spiritual ancestors, Englishmen and Utopists before him, he has dreamed the dream of his generation. But he has done something more: he has preached a new



crusade to a new chivalry. His book is not so much a traveller's tale as a call to action and a plan for the march ; it can hardly be laid aside without an answer, yes or no. Shall we stand arguing irrelevant matters ; debating the source of an undoubted impulse, questioning the power of legislation to make men virtuous, or of environment to change their inherited nature ? On these points Mr. Wells may have overshot the mark ; but the vital part of his proposal is that we should band ourselves deliberately to make the majority of men what only the small minority can be now. Then the right and reasonable thoughts which now fall dead among the stones will find fertile ground in almost every direction : so by changing not the quality but the quantity of the best opinion we shall obtain a real advance in the practice of life, as the wisest have long understood and desired it. A world-wide standard of efficiency, an army of the trained and disciplined, a brotherhood of devotion to the service of man, conceived as the offspring of an eternal purpose—is not our civilization near a final decadence, if it is not to advance along some such line as this ? And has not Mr. Wells made clearer the line of this advance, given its pioneers a memorable name, and summoned all men, without distinction, to join the new Order ? Is it not time that “ we who are of the ‘ Samurai ’ should know ourselves and each other ? ”

## PART II



## 9. POETRY AND TIME

AMONG the greatest English poets, some by their poetical work, some by the utterance in prose of their deliberate reflections, have supplied us with materials from which we can construct a definition of Poetry : a definition resting not upon mere authority, but upon a scientific analysis of the facts of human feeling, thought, and expression. This definition might perhaps be set down and annotated in some such words as these :—Poetry is the expression in speech, more or less rhythmical, of the æsthetic activity of the human spirit, the creative activity by which the world is presented to our consciousness. But this is not enough. it gives us only Poetry in the abstract, and makes no distinction between good and bad, greater and lesser poetry. The two necessary further stages are these : good poetry is not merely the expression of our intuitions, it is the masterly expression of rare, complex, and difficult states of consciousness ; and great poetry, the poetry which has power to stir many men and stir them deeply, is the expression of our consciousness of this world, tinged with man's universal longing for a world more perfect, nearer to the heart's desire. By definition, and in a plain prosaic way, we are all poets, all makers of our own world, but the great poets re-make it for us—they take this very world of time in which we live, and by an incantation they rebuild it for us, so that for an

instant we see it under a light that is not the light of Time

This definition, it will be seen, covers not only the more ordinary examples of poetical expression, but includes also the utterance of desires more profound and more far-reaching in their significance, and consequently more difficult to submit to any effective analysis. Longing for all perfection and regret for all imperfection in human life are the chief of these: the two are but different manifestations of the same deep desire, and the second is the more poignant. By the waters of Babylon man sits down and weeps in his secret heart: how shall he sing the Lord's song in a strange land? This regret for the imperfection of human life may be expressed in many ways, ranging from open revolt or indignation to a passionate dejection, redeeming pain by the subtle beauty of the voice which utters it. But among the many notes there is one which is heard again and again with greater frequency, and especially in the work of our own poets, the voice of a country where poetry has constantly vibrated with the deepest music of all. How many of our best have been indeed wanderers and seekers, weather-beaten venturers, exiles conscious of a hope that was but too truly infinite, longing for a return to a home that seemed half a dream and only half a memory.

It would take long to enumerate all the poems in which this sense of exile has been expressed: a few typical examples will suffice. The simplest is perhaps the most familiar:

“ Father, O Father, what do we here  
In this land of unbelief and fear ?  
The Land of Dreams is better far  
Above the light of the morning star.”

So sang Wilham Blake in the childlike terror of insight in a more wistful mood he murmured the faint unconscious moan of "the lost traveller's dream under the hill."

Matthew Arnold speaks often to the same purpose ; sometimes in the mere suggestion of a metaphor :

" And though we wear out life, alas !  
Distracted as a homeless wind,  
In beating where we must not pass,  
In seeking what we shall not find,

Yet we shall one day gain, life past,  
Clear prospect o'er our being's whole,  
Shall see ourselves and learn at last  
Our true affinities of soul "

Sometimes in the plainest of words :

" I knew not yet the gauge of time  
Nor wore the manacles of space .  
I felt it in some other clime,  
I saw it in some other place ,  
'Twas when the heavenly house I trod  
And lay upon the breast of God "

This leads us back to Wordsworth's doctrine :

" The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar "

but it has not Wordsworth's haunting music :

Hence in a season of calm weather,  
Though inland far we be,  
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither . . ."

and still less the imaginative eloquence of Emily Brontë's *Prisoner*, the vision of one killed with desire :

" Desire for nothing known in my maturer years,  
When Joy grew mad with care, at counting future tears .  
When if my spirit's sky was full of flashes warm,  
I knew not whence they came, from sun or thunderstorm

But first, a hush of peace—a soundless calm descends .  
The struggle of distress and fierce impatience ends  
Mute music soothes my breast—unutter'd harmony  
That I could never dream, till Earth was lost to me.

Then dawns the Invisible : the Unseen its truth reveals  
My outward sense is gone, my inward essence feels  
My wings are almost free—its home, its harbour found,  
Measuring the gulf, it stoops, and dares the final bound "

This is no new feeling, no mere phase of a modern restlessness : it is as well known to Crashaw as to Vaughan :

" The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers  
Her kindred with the stars ;—not basely hovers  
Below ; but meditates her immortal way  
Home to the original source of Light and intellectual Day "

But Vaughan, though less fervent, is even more convinced : in his curious distinctness of statement emotion is almost forgotten :

" Man hath still either toys or care,  
He hath no root, nor to one place is tied,  
But ever restless and irregular  
About the earth doth run and ride  
He knows he hath a home, but scarce knows where :  
He says it is so far  
That he hath quite forgot how to go there "

In all these passages the thought is unmistakable : the very word "home" or "homeless" is spoken in most of them. But there are many others not less clear, though in them the idea is conveyed rather by the emotional colouring than by the intellectual outline. Blake of course is a master in this art : the brooding of years escapes him in a single cry :

"Thou . . . didst . . . me to mortal life betray."

Tennyson's "banisht into mystery and the pain Of this divisible and indivisible world"<sup>1</sup> is an echo to this, and his Ancient Sage has some touch of the same haunted sense :

"For oft

On me when boy there came what I then called  
In my boy phrase 'The Passion of the Past'  
The first gray streak of earliest summer dawn,  
The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,  
As if the late and early were but one—  
A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower,  
Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone'  
A breath, a whisper, some divine farewell,  
Desolate sweetness, far and far away—  
What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?"

What had he lost? To that every poet has his own answer. For Wordsworth the loss is the forgetting by the child, as in sleep, of that imperial palace whence he came, the gradual fading of the clouds of glory which the soul comes trailing with it from its heavenly home. Here again Vaughan has been before him, in thought and almost in word :

<sup>1</sup> *De Profundis*



“ O how I long to travel back  
 And tread again that ancient track !  
 That I might once more reach that plain  
 Where first I left my glorious train,  
 From whence the enlightened spirit sees  
 That shady City of palm trees ”

For Matthew Arnold the loss is a moral loss, the ruin of our best nature, our unity :

“ We                   unwillingly return  
 Back to this meadow of calamity,  
 This uncongenial place, this human life, . . . .  
 To see if we will poise our life at last,  
 To see if we will now at last be true  
 To our own only true, deep buried selves,  
 Being one with which we are one with the whole world ”

For Rossetti it is the oblivion which veils from us our true spiritual kindred, revealed again only in the moment of a doubly intimate love.

“ Even so, when first I saw you, seemed it, love  
 That among souls allied to mine was yet  
 One nearer kindred than life hinted of  
 O born with me somewhere that men forget  
 And though in years of sight and sound unmet,  
 Known for my soul's birth-partner well enough ! ”

For Mr. Yeats it is the loss of peace in the world by the jarring of outward circumstance. In one song he looks to find it again here and now in a lake-island with a magic name , in another he will re-make the visible earth after his own heart :

“ The wrong of unshapely things is a wrong too great to be told .  
 I hunger to build them anew, and sit on a green knoll apart,

With the earth and the sky and the water remade like a  
casket of gold  
For my dreams of your image that blossoms, a rose, in the  
depths of my heart "

But the music which is most his own is deeper and  
sadder than this .

“ And gather you  
Who have sought more than is in rain or dew,  
Or in the sun and moon, or on the earth,—  
Or sighs amid the wandering starry mirth,—  
Or comes in laughter from the sea's sad lips,—  
And wage God's battles in the long gray ships.  
The sad, the lonely, the insatiable,  
To these Old Night shall all her mystery tell :  
God's bell has claimed them by the bitter cry  
Of their sad hearts, that may not live nor die ”

Life to this poet is a secret, a mystery revealed only  
to those who go upon a weary pilgrimage, a hopeless  
crusade : the sad, the lonely, the insatiable , the exiles  
far from home, whose quiet waters, even while they  
stand upon our pavements, they hear in the deep heart's  
core. Tagore is not so sad, but he too finds in the pain  
of exile the very principle of human life.

“ It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the  
world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite  
sky . It is this overspreading pain that deepens into  
loves and desires, into sufferings and joys in human homes .  
and this it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my  
poet's heart ”

So far, in looking at one after another of the delicately  
woven fabrics of the poets, we have seen two threads  
recurring more often than the rest . one is the thought  
of exile, the primary one for which our choice was made ;

the other is a secondary one, the idea of reminiscence, of an ante-natal existence. In the belief of some at least of these poets the home which man desires is not merely his by affinity, it is his by former possession, his from the beginning and before it, his from eternity, or at any rate as partaking of an eternal nature originally his own. This belief is of course familiar enough in doctrinal verse, but it is not in its poetic origin Christian: it has come down to us from the ancient world. Not the Roman world: for Horace and his countrymen home was earth, the never too much loved earth, and the exile that all men dread was death, the unwilling departure from woods and house and pleasing wife.

" Omnium  
Versatur urna serius oculus  
Sors exitura, et nos in æternum  
Exsilium impositura cymbæ "

The other-worldliness of our poetry has a deeper source: it is an outflow of the great Platonic watershed. "Now every human soul," says Plato, "must have seen the realities of that other world. . . but to recall those things by means of the things of this world is not easy for every soul. Few indeed are left who have a ready and sufficient memory: and they, when they behold here any likeness of the things there, are amazed and cannot contain themselves. But what this emotion really is they know not, because their perception is too indistinct."

It is impossible not to hear the echo of this in some of the most famous poems in our own language.

" Such harmony is in immortal souls,  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

And before Shakespeare, Spenser had already sung his  
*Hymn of Heavenly Beautie.*

“ Rapt with the ray of mine own ravisht thought  
Through contemplation of these goodly sights,  
And glorious images in heaven wrought,  
Whose wondrous Beauty, breathing sweet delights  
Do kindle Love in high-conceited sprights,  
I feine to tell the things that I behold,  
But feele my wits to faile and tongue to fold . . .  
Vouchsafe  
To shed into my breast some sparkling light  
Of thine eternall Truth, that I may show  
Some little beames to mortall eyes below  
Of that immortal Beautie, there with thee,  
Which in my weake distraughted mynd I see ”

The poets of our own time have had these visions too  
If one may be quoted it shall be Richard Watson Dixon

“ Hard is the way and strait the gate,  
And life is in a narrow strait  
Once only did my soul aspire  
To scale the Orient dropping fire,  
Once only floated in the ways  
Of heaven, apart from earthly haze :  
And then it was a foolish soul  
And knew not how the heavens do roll ”

And now we may perceive, interwoven with these two threads of exile and of reminiscence, a third and even a fourth line of thought, represented by the twin words Time and Eternity. They will need careful tracing, for the poets have used both of them in several different senses. But trace them we must, for in one way or another they seem invariably to be involved in the contrast between human life and the more perfect existence which is regretted or desired. Time, in the older poets,  
(2,735)

is taken in the simple and obvious sense, but it is not often simply or directly dealt with. It is generally presented by its effects, as a cause of decay and change, a ruining force, the antithesis of the eternal because it interferes with the durability of things : and it is commonly personified as a being hostile to man, and of the same nature as Death. To attain immortality is to sit "triumphing over Death and Change, and thee, O Time." A slight variation is made by Sir John Davies, who represents Death as setting free the soul to survive Time :

" Time itself in time shall cease to move ·  
Only the soul survives and lives for aye . . .  
And when thou think'st of her eternity  
Think not that Death against her nature is :  
Think it a birth, and when thou goest to die,  
Sing like a swan, as if thou wentst to bliss "

But this simple imagery could not continue to satisfy if we pass on to our own time we shall find repeated attempts to express a more philosophic view. It is perhaps not quite certain what Swinburne meant by the title of his poem *The Triumph of Time*, but I think it may fairly be inferred that he used the word Time in a double sense : first in the old sense as the Depriver, "Now Time has done with his one sweet word," and secondly as the mark and symbol of things transitory and unworthy, the "fugitive things not good to treasure" on which the rest of his life must now be spent. If only his love could for one moment have reached fruition, he cries, it would have attained immortality, and this is the main thought in a poem which might otherwise have been described as the

triumph of Sentimentality : a real thought, for it makes Time no longer an external force, but an inherent quality of human life, and that is a long step towards the truth

Rossetti, though in a fashion entirely his own, supplies a parallel to this advance. His Blessèd Damozel is no longer conscious of Time herself : after ten years' absence from earth " Her seems she scarce had been a day " in heaven ; but as she looks down from " the rampart of God's house,"

" From the fixed place of Heaven she saw  
Time like a pulse shake fierce  
Through all the worlds "

Here, too, Time is an inherent quality, almost a physical quality, of life in the worlds created ; a clock-beat audible and even visible, a feverish throbbing which will pass away when the calm of eternity is reached. It may not be the best image available, but it is a very powerful one, and it is, as far as it goes, an image of truth

A later poet, Rupert Brooke, thought more philosophically of the nature of Time, and made a more deliberate attempt to express his vision of it. He shows us an interior of the most ordinary kind, a scene of laughing friends around a tea-table, himself looking on at their changing faces .

" Till suddenly, and otherwhence  
I looked upon your innocence,  
For lifted clear and still and strange,  
From the dark woven flow of change,  
Under a vast and starless sky

I saw the immortal moment lie.  
One instant I, an instant knew  
As God knows all And it and you,  
I, above Time, oh ! blind ! could see  
In witless immortality  
I saw the marble cup . the tea  
Hang on the air, an amber stream :  
I saw the fire's unglittering gleam,  
The pointed flame, the frozen smoke  
No more the flooding lamplight broke  
On flying eyes and lips and hair ;  
But lay, but slept unbroken there  
On stiller flesh and body breathless,  
And lips and laughter stayed and deathless,  
And words on which no silence grew.  
Light was more alive than you.  
For suddenly and otherwhence  
I looked on your magnificence.  
I saw the stillness and the light,  
And you, august, immortal, white,  
Holy and strange and every glint,  
Posture and jest and thought and tint,  
Freed from the mask of transiency,  
Triumphant in eternity,  
Immote, immortal "

In this scene what the poet has most obviously done is to fix the appearances of things at a given moment of time, as they are fixed by an instantaneous photograph, or by the re-creative effort of a skilful painter. If he had done no more than this, he would have failed of his aim, for he expressly says that what he is trying to show us is his vision of the immortal moment, of things known as God knows them. If he does not succeed in this, he certainly does not altogether fail he conveys the impression of something revealed, he gives as marks of the eternal the qualities of holiness and stillness, and he

represents Time or transiency as a mask which in life hides the immortal being from us. What that immortal being is he can only express by two means, neither of them entirely convincing first by the ascription to the essential personality of such qualities as innocence and magnificence, and secondly by a paradoxical statement that in the eternal vision such transient things as glints of light, postures of body, jests and thoughts, and tints of colour, are no longer transient but immote and immortal. The result is that while we readily accept the view of Time as a mask, we remain without a really clear image of the eternal behind it. This is no new difficulty. It is very plainly felt in one of Vaughan's best-known poems, *The World*. This begins in a splendid and daring attempt to picture eternity, and rapidly falls away into commonplace allegories of the life of man in the lower and darker region of the earth.

“ I saw Eternity the other night,  
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,  
All calm as it was bright,  
And round beneath it, Time, in hours, days, years,  
Driv'n by the spheres,  
Like a vast shadow moved, in which the world  
And all her train were hurl'd ”

Fine as this is, it is but an abstract way of summarizing the eternal, while the image of Time as darkness is not nearly so vivid as Rossetti's suggestion of a great pulse beating throughout the universe

Shelley's thought was often abstract too, and his images of Eternity vague, but in *Adonais* he has given us the best image yet found by a poet for the relation of Time and Eternity.



“ Life like a dome of many coloured glass  
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity  
 Until Death tramples it to fragments    Die  
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !  
 Follow where all is fled ”

It is noteworthy that this image of Time as a medium which intercepts and dims our vision of the Eternal is one of three chosen by a living philosopher to suggest his own view of the relation of Time to Eternity. The passage begins :

“ We must conceive our perception of things in Time to be an illusion, of the same character as those which make us see the sun at sunset larger than at midday, and make us see a straight stick crooked when it enters the water. I do not, after childhood, suppose the stick to be really crooked. But however clearly I may satisfy myself, either by reasoning or by the sense of touch, that the stick has not changed its shape since it ~~was~~ put in the water, I shall continue to get visual sensations from it resembling those which would be given me by a crooked stick in the air. Of this sort is the illusion of Time—though it is far more general, and far more difficult to grasp. It hides part of the truth, it suggests a wrong judgment . . . ”

Shortly afterwards, as though dissatisfied with these two images, he continues as follows :

“ At the same time, this appearance is not *mere* illusion. We perceive, in spite of this illusive form of Time, some of the real nature of the Timeless reality. So, if we look through a window of red glass, we shall see the objects outside correctly as to their form, size, and motion, though not correctly as to their colour. The question is of course much more complicated here. We cannot get round on the other side of Time, as we can on the other side of the glass, and so discover by direct observation what part of our previous experience was due to the form of Time. And

to reach and justify an idea of what the true timeless nature of existence may be is a very hard task, though not, I think, an impossible one. We must content ourselves here with the general result that where existence appears to us under the form of Time, we see it partly but not entirely as it really is."<sup>1</sup>

In these passages of prose, marked by all his own lucid and logical method of exposition, Dr. McTaggart has been almost driven to cross the frontier of poetry. He has at any rate throughout his treatise provided us with invaluable hints for the criticism of existing poems on the subject we are now considering, and has perhaps cleared the way for a future advance by the poets. In the first place he has distinguished between the several uses of the word Eternity or Eternal. To many poets and their readers Eternity means merely everlasting Time—what Tennyson desires in the line, "Give me the glory of going on and still to be." This, however common, is neither a philosophical nor a poetical view. It does not admit of that deep sense of exile, that desire for a city of the soul, which is of the essence of poetry and could never be satisfied by any mere perpetuation of this life. Secondly, there is a sense in which Eternity is used to mean such a timelessness as is possessed by all general laws. The truths of mathematics, of reason, of beauty, of the highest moral excellence, are all called eternal because they cannot be imagined by us as changing or passing away in any age or condition of existence. It was of such laws and such an eternity that Sophocles wrote, in one of the greatest moments of Greek poetry:

<sup>1</sup> *The Relation of Time and Eternity*, by John Ellis McTaggart, The University Press, University of California, 1908.

“ Would that fate would let me wear  
Hallowed innocence of words and all deeds, weighing  
Well the laws thereof, begot on holier air,  
Far on high sublimely stablished, whereof only  
Heaven is father nor did birth of mortal mould  
Bring them forth, nor shall oblivion lull to lonely  
Slumber Great in these is God, and grows not old ”<sup>1</sup>

We feel this conception to be magnificent, and in its own place so it is. It brings with it a kind of mountain air, which helps us, as it helped Antigone, to remember that local and transitory by-laws are not the only guide to the conduct of life, and that it may be right to disobey them when they conflict capriciously with other laws which we see to be permanent and universal. But if we look further we shall find that this view of the Eternal is not wholly satisfying: with the Sophoclean mountain air it brings also plenty of the dust of common life. Not only every general law, but every trivial event has this kind of eternity. The fact of the General Election of 1918 is now an eternal truth, and the fact of my having recorded a vote, and the further fact that my vote was ineffectual. And these truths may be interesting or important to me for some time, or even so long as I exist; but certainly no longer. About every person and every thing there are innumerable eternal truths, but if “ eternal ” were limited to this meaning it would not tell us that any person or thing was eternal.

Yet the word is felt to be an interesting and a significant one, too interesting and too significant to be redeemable by any mere paper coinage. The poet who uses it does so at his peril: he must be sure of what he

<sup>1</sup> Swinburne's version, in *Athena*.

is offering—it must be either an image of his belief or a light of his vision. As an example of the latter I have already quoted two lines from Shelley's *Adonais*: there are many more in the same poem which aim at setting forth a definite theory of immortality, and the poet is so full of it that he takes the best part of seventeen stanzas to express himself. First, *Adonais* is not dead. "He hath awakened from the dream of life." *We* are decaying: *he* lives and wakes. But how? "He is made one with Nature. . . . He is a portion of the loveliness which once he made more lovely." This again is more fully set forth:

"The splendours of the firmament of Time  
May be eclipsed but are extinguished not.  
Like stars to their appointed heights they climb,  
And death is a low mist which cannot blot  
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought  
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair  
And love and life contend in it for what  
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there  
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air."

This, we are told, is how other poets have attained dazzling immortality. *Adonais* has now become as them, and we too have but to die if we would be with that which we do seek. "Follow where all is fled!" The Universal Light and Beauty, the Benediction which the eclipsing curse of birth cannot quench, will consume the clouds of cold mortality and bring us to the abode where the Eternal are.

In this famous passage there seem to be two ideas, one of which is already familiar to us, while the other is newer to English poetry. The first is a version of the old lament in exile. at birth we pass under a curse, we

come into a place of dream and stormy visions, a strife and a mad trance, a shadow which we must outgrow again. Death sets us free. also like a low mist it hides from earth the higher course of those who rise like stars in the firmament of Time. But Shelley does not stop here—he goes on to answer the further question of the nature of this continued existence. In spite of the phrases “ he hath awakened,” “ he lives and wakes,” in spite of the glowing picture of the poets who died young, rising from their thrones to welcome Adonais, it is clear that the immortality assigned to the dead is one not of personal continuance but of transfused existence. Adonais has become an influence, part of Heaven’s light, part of the one Spint’s plastic stress, which sweeps through the dull, dense world and uplifts young hearts in moments of lofty thought.

All this is expressed with so much beauty and sincerity that we cannot reproduce it in any prose analysis ; and that implies that there was in Shelley’s intuition something beyond the scientific equivalent of his words. Even so the stanzas are apt to lose their hold, to seem less adequate on a later reading than they appeared in the discovery of youth. In the mind of some critical reader they may even minister to the mood of that ironical letter of Andrew Lang’s to a Dead Author, in which he imagines a philosophic auction where the buyer is offered “ a distinguished position in the Choir Invisible, but not, of course, a personal immortality.” Such a position, I think, will never satisfy either the sceptic or the man of faith. To the latter it will be a mockery, a form of words, what I have called a piece of paper currency with no real value corresponding to that upon its face. To the sceptic it will be a superfluity.

A philosopher like Mr F H Bradley, fervently scientific, but of a reticent and considerate temper, one who would keep silence on the question of a future life until the subject was forced before him, and then speak sadly of its improbability, would never attempt to replace the lost hope by a substitute quite different in essence. If he tells us that "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct, but to find these reasons is no less an instinct,"<sup>1</sup> he is justifying a kind of faith, and not a kind of fraud. But the Choir Invisible will always appear a kind of fraud to those who ask for an eternal life. On this line Poetry has failed to irradiate Philosophy: the current has passed powerfully enough, but not along a well-selected filament.

Yet there is, I believe, at least one thread of Philosophy through which a poetic force may some day flow to give us light. There is a third meaning of Eternity, in which it is used of the timelessness of existences, and Dr. McTaggart has drawn from it a filament of thought, of which I will endeavour to trace the convolutions. To begin with, there has long been a theory which "holds that all existence is really timeless, and that the *prima facie* appearance of Time which our experience presents is in reality only an appearance which disguises the nature of the timeless reality." In this case all existence will be eternal, though some, or even all of it, may appear to us as temporal. This doctrine, that all reality is timeless, was held by Kant, by Schopenhauer, by Hegel, and is now accepted by Dr. McTaggart. It has been accepted also, and transmuted, by some of our poets, as we have already seen

<sup>1</sup> *Appearance and Reality*

We are exiles, they tell us, and make our pilgrimage in a strange twilight of illusion.

“ In every land thy feet may tread  
Time like a veil is round thy head :  
Only the land thou seekst with me  
Never hath been nor yet shall be ” <sup>1</sup>

The question then arises, what relation does Time bear to Eternity on such a theory as this? And the answer is, the relation of illusion to vision, of an inadequate view of reality to an adequate view. But here the philosopher himself propounds a still more momentous question. “ Is there,” he asks, “ any law according to which states in Time, as we pass from earlier states to later ones, tend to become more adequate or less adequate representations of the timeless reality? ” In the language of the poets, are we daily coming more nearly in sight of our “ dear lost land of home,” or are we like “ the youth that daily further from the East must travel ” ?

The philosopher, in order to answer this momentous question, stays for a moment to consider the nature of the time series. Events in Time take place in an order—a fixed and irrevocable order. But there is in the mere form of Time itself nothing to determine what this order shall be. Of any two events the nature of Time requires either that they shall be simultaneous or that one shall precede the other. But it gives us no help towards determining which shall be the case. “ What then does determine the order of events in Time, on the supposition that Time is only an illusory way of regarding a timeless reality ? ” The philosopher believes

<sup>1</sup> Song in *Dream-market*

there is good reason to hold that the order is determined by the adequacy with which the states represent the eternal reality, so that those states come next together which only vary infinitesimally in the degree of their adequacy ; and that the whole of the time series shows a steady process of change of adequacy—a change towards greater or less adequacy. If once more we translate this by an image from the poets, we shall say that the order of events in Time depends on the thickening or thinning of the “ earthly haze ”—we see them one by one more and more clearly or less and less clearly, as the “ dark reality ” in which we live is either a morning or an evening twilight, passing into fuller day or deeper night.

We have now reached the culminating point of our inquiry, and the final question before us is one of the utmost interest and significance. If we here see darkly, as through a dome of many-coloured glass, an earthly haze, a mist or twilight, it is obviously a matter of life and death for the human spirit to know whether the darkness will lift or deepen, whether the reality will clear or fade. We are assured, by the philosopher whom I have chosen to follow, that there are good reasons for believing that our view of reality is becoming not dimmer but clearer, that the representations of reality presented to us in the time series are becoming—by infinitesimal degrees perhaps, but none the less truly—more and more adequate, and will continue inevitably to do so until we reach the last stage in the series and enter upon the perfect vision which lies beyond Time. We must conceive Eternity as being not in the past, as it were, but in the future. Thus Time runs up to Eternity, and ceases in Eternity.



We have not at this moment time or thought to spend upon the pathway of reasoning by which this conclusion is arrived at, or upon the tracks which radiate from it in many directions. We are concerned with it only as material for poetry, and our first reflection will be that the poets have already in their swift and unaccountable way decided the very question at issue, and decided it in two very different senses. For many of them, as we have seen, life is an exile, and the true account of it that given by the Eastern poet

“All that is not One must ever suffer with the wound of absence.”

But while for some, as for Wordsworth and Blake, the Eternal reality lies behind us, before the beginning of Time, and we have come down from our high estate, “betrayed” to mortal life, or overtaken by the eclipsing curse of birth; for others our existence is one of glimpses which lighten our darkness unforgettably, and may end by bringing, if not certainty, at least a growing happiness.

Yet ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hill battlements of Eternity,  
Those shaken mists a space unsettle, then  
Round the half glimpsed turrets wash again.”

That is from Francis Thompson, a brave but much tried exile: John Masefield is happier, though not more rich in music.

“But when men count  
Those hours of life that were a bursting fount  
Sparkling the dusty heart with living springs,  
There seems a world, beyond our earthly things,  
Gated by golden moments, each bright time  
Opening to show the City white like lime,

High tower'd and many peopled  
But trust the happy moments—what they gave  
Makes man less fearful of the certain grave  
And gives his work compassion and new eyes ·  
The days that make us happy make us wise ”

I have said that such a philosophic theory as we have been examining will assist our criticism of familiar poems and perhaps lead to a new advance by poets to come. It may be asked what is meant by this. We have found that in our poetry there are already many passages which bear well the light of philosophic criticism, and some of them, like the two just quoted, seem to point in the same direction as our theory itself. No doubt Poetry has often dispensed with Logic, but on the other hand Poetry can embody or express not only the æsthetic but the intellectual activities of the human spirit, and it is impossible that any intellectual activity should be without its effect on the poet who gains experience by it. Poems are the outcome of moods, strong poems or deep poems are generally the outcome of habitual moods or long-seated beliefs. The poet whose philosophy is clearly and firmly his own will be the better able to give his poems the outline which will magically influence the world of feeling; for in poetry, as in painting, outline affects many men at least as powerfully as colour affects others. If such a poet, though believing in the existence of evil, and profoundly regretting the darkness of human life and the hardness of those “thoroughfares of stones” which we have to tread in our pilgrimage, if such a poet were intellectually convinced that whatever the state of the Universe now, it must inevitably improve, and the state of each conscious individual in it must inevitably improve, until they reached a final state

of perfect goodness, or at least of very great goodness—a vision of reality now obscured by the illusion of Time—surely his poetry would have the power to give, as only poetry can give, consolation and encouragement in the evils of the present. In saying that I am only repeating, *mutatis mutandis*, the claim of our philosopher himself for his philosophy. He regards the future optimistically, as he says, because he regards it as “the progressive manifestation of the Eternal”

His service to Poetry will not, I think, end there. Hitherto the poets have been more often and perhaps more convincingly employed in bewailing the miseries of exile than in exploring the way by which we may come through Time to the land of our desire. Those of them who have sung the song of hope have looked forward to the end and passed over the steps between with one burst of exquisite music or of defiant endurance.

“ Whilst my soul, like quiet palmer,  
Travelleth towards the land of heaven,  
Over the silver mountains  
Where sprung the nectar fountains,  
There will I kiss  
The bowls of bliss  
And drink mine everlasting fill  
Upon every milken hill  
My soul will be a-dry before,  
But after it will thirst no more ”

Raleigh's vision of the end has silvered even the stony wilderness into Delectable Mountains, as with a spiritual moonlight, but moonlight is an uncertain guide for travellers. Patmore's courage almost outdoes him :

“ Beautiful habitations, auras of delight !  
Who shall bewail the crags and bitter foam

And angry sword blades flashing left and right,  
Which guard yon glittering height  
That none thereby may come ?—  
I mind me still  
I did respire the lonely auras sweet,  
I did the blest abodes behold, and at the mountains' feet  
Bathed in the holy stream of Hermon's thymy hill "

I am not suggesting that poetry better than that of which we have been reminding ourselves is to be desired or looked for in the future . I am speaking hopefully of a new poetry, new in a way which is hard to indicate. No one, without creating poetry upon the instant, could imagine what this poetry will be like when it comes. We can only say of it that it will help us not so much to lament Time as to forget it, and to think of Eternity, not as an infinitely distant and uncertain inheritance, but as a land to be gradually reclaimed from the wilderness by our own labour and virtue, it may be even now in the time of this mortal life, it may be in another day than this. What the form, or even the ostensible subject of this poetry will be, we cannot even conjecture . it will lead us no doubt, as we have been led heretofore, by secrets whispered or murmured, by scarcely perceived attuning chords, by glancing lights and unsuspected byways, by messages half heard and never consciously understood. But they will bring us on our way

" From the words of the poet men take what meanings please them , yet their last meaning points to Thee."

## 10. PEACOCK, SCOTT, AND ROBIN HOOD

IT is, I think, the common opinion that a creative artist, and especially an artist who works with words, is an extremely self-centred person, perhaps an egoist, certainly a being of marked individuality, who is moved first of all to express feelings different from those of other men. The poets have provided a great deal of evidence to support this judgment, and it will probably be admitted to contain at least half the truth. But to some of us it is the other part, the truth that is not quite so obvious or so easily explored, which offers at this moment the more attractive line of inquiry. If there is to be good poetry, or good creative work in prose, no doubt there must be successful expression—self-expression if you will. The further question remains—what does that “self” include? What the poetic bee gives to the hive is certainly his own honey, the honey which he has himself selected and secreted, but his finished product derives many of its distinctive qualities from the flowery world in which he lives, and—what is more important—his honey-making habits, and even his magic honeybag itself, are the result of untold centuries of co-operation in an industrious community.

The metaphor must not be taken too exactly, in

human life, so far, there has been more scope than there is in hive life for originality and new departures. Poet differeth from poet in glory, more than bee from bee. But whether he cares to admit it or not, every poet does in fact owe much of his material, and of the mental formation which governs his expression, to the thought and feeling of his own nation, past and present. It has even proved possible for a body of literature, expressing a very distinctive view of life, to spring up and last for many generations, without a trace of any individual personality, but strongly marked by the character of a race. For each of our old ballads there was beyond doubt a single author, or a succession of single authors, at work, but they were so completely identified with the community that the remembrance of their very names has perished. Each of them must have had a self, and that he expressed, but in so doing he expressed a greater self, a national self, from which he drew his peculiar power, and for which he spoke so well that he perpetuated what he had received.

There is no more striking example of this than the ballad story of Robin Hood—a legend which was from the beginning handed down without any sign of authorship. We shall look presently into its long history; but first let me remind the reader of its unique charm, and the perfection with which it expressed or accorded with certain marked characteristics of the people among whom it was so long a national possession:

“ In somer, when the shawes be sheyne  
 And leves be large and long,  
 Hit is full mery in fayre foreste  
 To here the foulys song .

To se the dere draw to the dale  
 And leve the hilles hee,  
 And shadow hem in the leves grene  
 Under the grenewode tree."

To this day, in a combe of the Quantocks or of Exmoor, or in a glade of that forest where the kings of England have been at home for some nine hundred years, you may lie beneath the bracken at noon and see the deer draw to the dale and shadow them under the greenwood tree. And, if you are one who knows the best and discounts the worst of your fellow countrymen, you will hear out of old memory the story of

" Robin that was a proud outlaw  
 The while he walked on ground .  
 So courteous an outlaw as he was one  
 Was never none y-found "

And then his courteous greenwood law :

" ' Thereof no force,' then said Robin ;  
 ' We shall do well enow ,  
 But look ye do no husband harm  
 That tilleth with his plow.  
  
 ' No more ye shall no good yeoman  
 That walketh by greenwood shaw :  
 Nor yet no knight nor no squier  
 That will be a good fellow.' "

Nor should any company be harmed wherein there was a woman ; only " these bishops and these archbishops " and such oppressors as the Sheriff of Nottingham were to be appropriately kept in mind. The tale is a long and excellent one, true in every note, but truest at the end. When Robin has been pardoned by King Edward

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and taken away to Court, he pines for his old life in Barnsdale and gets leave to go :

“ When he came to greene-wood  
In a merry morning,  
There he heard the notes small  
Of birds merry singing.

It is far gone,’ said Robin Hood,  
‘ That I was latest here ,  
Me list a little for to shoot  
At the dunne deer ’ ”

We can judge this idealized forest life, rough and generous, honourable and unscrupulous, English and poetical, by a better test than our own feeling : it is mirrored with all its long descended beauty in the deep woodland pool of Shakespeare’s mind. When Oliver, in *As You Like It*, asks “ Where will the old Duke live ? ” Charles, from whom no one could have expected sentiment of his own, replies : “ They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him ; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England ; they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.”

There is, then, a very old and powerful enchantment in this ballad , and we are now to see how, centuries after it had touched Shakespeare, it fell again upon two men of a very different generation, one living by Thames, and one by Tweed. In 1818 the volume of Robin Hood ballads, collected by Joseph Ritson, had long been familiar to Walter Scott, and he had resolved to make use of the story as part of his material for a new novel. His object was, he says, in the preface to *Ivanhoe*, to



"obtain an interest for the traditions and manners of Old England, similar to that which has been excited in behalf of those of our poorer and less celebrated neighbours. The name of Robin Hood, if duly conjured with, should raise a spirit as soon as that of Rob Roy; and the patriots of England deserve no less their renown in our modern circles than the Bruces and Wallaces of Caledonia."

*Ivanhoe* was begun, accordingly, during the same painful illness of 1818 in which the *Legend of Montrose* was finished; by July 1819 it was well advanced, and the book was published in December of that year.

By a remarkable coincidence, Thomas Love Peacock, the brilliant author of *Nightmare Abbey*, conceived the idea of writing a novel on the same Robin Hood story, almost exactly at the same moment. Ritson's book had but lately come into his hands, but its effect was intoxicating. On August 6, 1818, he notes in his diary: "Could not read or write for scheming my romance. Rivers, castles, forests, abbeys, monks, maids, kings, and banditti dancing before me like a masked ball." And again on August 12th and 13th he was "reading ballads about Robin Hood." On 30th August he wrote to Shelley, "I am also scheming a novel, which I shall write in the winter, and which will keep me during the whole of that season at home." In another letter to the same friend, on 29th November, he describes his novel as "a Comic Romance of the Twelfth Century, which I shall make the vehicle of much oblique satire on the oppressions that are done under the sun. I have suspended the Essay till the completion of the Romance."

These diligent intentions were not realized. The Romance made good progress, but was necessarily laid

aside when an unexpected chance of entering the India Office was presented to Peacock. He set to work immediately on a laborious thesis on Indian affairs, received the coveted appointment in January 1819, and became at once absorbed in his new profession. It was not until 1822, more than two years after the appearance of *Ivanhoe*, that *Maid Marian* was at last completed and published.

It is here that we reach the point of interest which led me to the present inquiry. We have before us two novels, each in its own way a classic, and each bearing the signs of its admitted descent from a common ancestor. But there is more than this: the resemblances between the two stories, in spite of the widely different mood and handling, are so striking as inevitably to raise the question—are these due to chance, or is one of the two novels in some degree imitative of the other? And if there is imitation, since by the dates it could only be imitation of the serious romance by the comic, was *Maid Marian* written as a burlesque of *Ivanhoe*?

The possibility of this suggestion was foreseen by Peacock, and he took care to insert in his book a prefatory note: "This little work, with the exception of the last three chapters, was all written in the autumn of 1818." The precaution was sufficient for its purpose: Peacock was well known as a man of letters, a wit, a scholar and a gentleman, and from 1819 to 1923 his words have been quoted, with the extracts from diary and letters which I have already given, as conclusive evidence that *Maid Marian* owes its resemblance to *Ivanhoe* in part to a common ancestry, and in part to pure coincidence. Dr. Richard Garnett, who edited Peacock's novels in 1891, speaks of the dates as vindicat-

ing his "claim to originality in the choice of his subject," and adds. "Were they not irrefragably established, it might be difficult to credit him with absolute independence of *Ivanhoe*, though even then what was subtracted from his originality might have to be added to his intrepidity. *Ivanhoe*, however, was not published till December 1819, when the all but completed *Maid Marian* had lain in Peacock's desk for a twelvemonth. Any parallel between the two would, of course, be extravagant. *Ivanhoe* is an epic, *Maid Marian* an idyll." Mr. Carl van Doren, who wrote Peacock's life in 1911, says, "The allusions to Peacock's romance in his diary of 1818 would furnish assurance of his good faith, even if it were doubted. There is, however, a better proof," and he goes on to emphasize the contrast between the two books, much as Dr. Garnett had done twenty years before.

Both these writers seem to me to miss the real point, or points, of interest. Dr. Garnett assumes that proof of "originality in the choice of his subject" is equivalent to proof of his "absolute independence of *Ivanhoe*," and refrains from any further inquiry into the resemblances. Mr. van Doren defends Peacock's good faith, which no one has ever doubted, and then, somewhat oddly, cites as "a better proof" than the author's own statements the contrast between the general character of the two books. Both these commentators assume that, if the books are independent or different in character, their admitted resemblance is of no interest.

For lovers of Peacock, of Scott, and of Robin Hood, this may well seem an impossible position. To one at least the matter appears in this light. Not only is Peacock's good faith unquestionable, but the right of

an author and artist to borrow where he pleases is also unquestionable. He stands to be judged, not by what he has used, but by the use he has made of it. If he has borrowed a skein of silk and exposed it for sale as his own, he is condemned; but there is no known penalty, for the crime is a profitless and unlikely one. If he has used the silk to weave into a brocade of his own making, he is estimated by the beauty of his design, without regard to the source of his material. But when all moral and legal irrelevances are brushed aside, there may be, and in this case there certainly are, very interesting reflections to be made on materials and sources. Some of these I shall attempt to follow out. The evidence now known to us was probably not all available to the writers of 1818, but we happen to know exactly what were the materials mainly relied on by both. First there was Ritson's volume of 1795, containing the ballads with notes and additions; secondly, there was in each case some edition of the seventeenth century collection known as *Robin Hood's Garland*, and thirdly, there were the two plays published in 1601 by Antony Munday (assisted by Henry Chettle)—*The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington*, and *The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntington*. Of these plays Scott may possibly have read the whole text, but it seems probable that Peacock knew only so much as is quoted in Ritson's book. In any case, these are the ancestors of *Ivanhoe* and *Maid Marian*, and no one will dispute the general resemblance which is the result of this common descent. The Robin Hood legend and its heroes appear in all the eighteen chapters of Peacock's book; in Scott's they form a secondary thread in the story, but are the making of some fifteen chapters out

of forty-four In both we recognize the famous outlaw and marksman of the *Lytell Geste of Robin Hood*—the best and earliest ballad in Ritson's collection—with his almost equally famous followers, Little John, William Scarlet or Scathelock, Much the Miller's son, and Friar Tuck. In both, as in the ballad, they waylay priors and abbots, defeat oppressors, perform miracles of archery, kill the king's deer, bring all and sundry to their rendezvous in a forest glade; and, after proving the immense superiority of the greenwood life to any more civilized existence, they end by falling on their knees before the real king of England and receiving his forgiveness for their unconventional habits. In both there is a subtle suggestion of the poetical, the disinterested, the genial side of life, and the joys of a free but not undisciplined society in the open air, an inspiration which has been since reinforced by the Red Indian romances of Fenimore Cooper, and now, through the genius of Sir Robert Baden-Powell, is stirring the young blood of all the European races. Every Boy Scout is a Scarlet or a Little John; every Girl Guide a Maid Marian.

Corresponding to this general likeness there are some differences which are equally natural. Scott could not have refrained from songs in such a book as *Ivanhoe*; five of his characters sing between them half a dozen times—Richard and Wamba twice exemplify the troubadour tradition, Ulrica shrieks a death-song from the Sagas, Rebecca and Rowena have each a hymn for their own occasions. But Peacock goes far beyond this: in a book of less than one-third the length, his gay little company give us three times as many songs—eleven set pieces and eight catches—or snatches.

Except for a few in which the heroine joins, and one which she sings alone, these are all in the part of Brother Michael, the same tall friar who began his legendary life as Friar Tuck, but afterwards acquired some of the peculiar characteristics of Frère Jean des Entommeures, from the Rabelais country. The spirit with which he and Matilda render their parts has a remarkable effect; it not only differentiates this from all other novels, but transforms it into a "musical comedy," and reminds us of nothing so much as *The Beggar's Opera* in the past, and *H M S. Pinafore* in the period which was yet to come.

Another difference is this. Maid Marian, or Matilda FitzWater, round whom the whole action of Peacock's book is made to revolve, finds no place at all in *Ivanhoe*. Scott did not need her—she would indeed have been an embarrassment to an author already provided with two competing heroines—and he may have had another reason, an antiquary's reason, for omitting her. She is not of the same ancient descent as Robin Hood and Little John. They belong to the thirteenth century, and were already popular in the fourteenth, while she appears for the first time only at the end of the fifteenth. Even then, when Barclay introduces her name in his *Fourth Eclogue*, he seems almost to dissociate her from Robin Hood, as belonging to a separate story, he makes Codrus say to Menalcas.

"Yet would I gladly heare some mery fit  
Of Maide Marian, or els of Robin Hood"

This was in 1500, in 1601 we find that Munday has done much to improve her position. She is now a noble lady, Matilda FitzWater, daughter of the Baron of

Arlingford, betrothed to a noble spendthrift, Robert, Earl of Huntington, whose marriage is unavoidably postponed by the unfeeling conduct of his creditors. Upon his "downfall" he takes to the greenwood (in this play the forest of Sherwood, not Barnsdale), with his faithful followers and the fair Matilda. He lays down a code of forest laws for his men, the first and second of which are that, while it is their chance to live in Sherwood a poor outlaw's life, none of them shall presume to call their master

"By name of Earl, Lord, Baron, Knight or Squire,  
But simply by the name of Robin Hood,"

and similarly Matilda is to be called only by the name of Maid Marian, which in fact the playwright has already given her inadvertently on several occasions in the two preceding Acts. After having been thus clearly explained by Antony Munday, she was received everywhere; from 1663 onwards *Robin Hood's Garland* always gives her a place, though not a very distinguished one; in the edition of 1723 she is a mere broadside heroine—a "queen of the shepherds" with a pseudo-classical name, and a genius for marriage at first sight.

" 'For 'tis a fine life, and 'tis void of all strife,'  
   ' So 'tis, sir,' Clorinda reply'd.  
   ' But O ! ' said bold Robin, ' how sweet it would be  
     If Clorinda would be my sweet bride.'  
 She blush'd at the notion, yet after a pause  
   Said, ' Yes, Sir, and with all my heart '  
   ' Then let us send for a priest,' said Robin Hood,  
     ' And be married before we do part ' "

Of course this young lady's past was as well known to Peacock as to Scott; but Peacock wanted only a

burlesque Baron's daughter, who could sing and bully her father. For a place in *Ivanhoe* no third lady could be accepted whose record would not illustrate the manners of the Norman aristocracy as well as their titles. No; and when we find that at the date required by these two stories there was not in England a peerage of FitzWater, or even such a surname, we must admit that Maid Marian is a very shadowy figure, an old Morris-dancer's part perhaps, taken over by Matilda, and as for Matilda, she is simply Munday's child, a parvenu with a faked Norman pedigree, who has been taught to sing and act—charmingly—by Mr Peacock.

And now, having said all that need be here said of the natural likenesses and unlikenesses of the two books, I must draw attention to the passages in which resemblance may be held to imply a closer connection than that which comes by common origin or by accident. Let me repeat that this is a literary and not a legal or moral inquiry; it is, moreover, one in which every one can read and judge for himself. What is here contributed is not an argument, but a record of personal experience. I first read *Maid Marian* in 1891, with a fair knowledge of the Robin Hood ballads in my mind, but no thought of any other source. Seven chapters went quickly by, with a mingled effect of familiarity and novelty. If the story or the treatment reminded me of anything, it was of the *Ingoldsby Legends*. Then in Chapter VIII we were to witness the execution by the Sheriff of Nottingham's men of Robin's cousin, William Gamwell. "But when they reached the place of execution, Little John appeared, accompanied by a ghostly friar." The friar was, of course, Robin in disguise. He duly approached young Gamwell at the



foot of the ladder, under the suspicious Sheriff's very nose, and began to play his double part. He "opened his book, groaned, turned up the white of his eyes, tossed up his arms in the air, and said '*Dominus vobiscum*'" A moment or two of silence, and he threw off his holy robes, appeared as a forester clothed in green, with a sword in his right hand and a horn in his left, blew his horn, rallied his hundred bowmen, completed the rescue and shot the Sheriff himself through the arm. All was as it should be—in fact, as it had always been.

But my other and more accurate self, the man in the basement, whom nothing can escape, suggested that I had overlooked something. For a moment I thought, "Surely in the old story it was not '*Dominus vobiscum*', it was '*Pax vobiscum*'" "Yes," came the answer, "but it was not in the old story at all—it is from *Ivanhoe*."

He was right, as he usually is. In Sir Walter's XXVth chapter Wamba the fool volunteers to carry a message to his master Cedric, imprisoned in Front de Boeuf's castle. He goes off in the disguise of a friar, saying "*Pax vobiscum*," and in Chapter XXVI, when he has gained admittance to Cedric and exchanged his dress with him, he gives him also these two words to enable him to act the same part in turn. "The spell lies in two words," replied Wamba. "*Pax vobiscum* will answer all queries. If you go or come, eat or drink, bless or ban, *Pax vobiscum* carries you through it all. It is as useful to a friar as a broomstick to a witch, or a wand to a conjurer. . . I think, if they bring me out to be hanged to-morrow, as is much to be doubted they may, I will try its weight upon the finisher of the sentence."

"If such prove the case," said his master, "my religious orders are soon taken—'*Pax vobiscum*'"—and he escapes forthwith

It was not until afterwards that I verified this reference; at the moment I was content to go on with the story, for I had not yet read Dr Garnett's preface or heard of Peacock's diary, and his note claiming priority for his own book. It did not occur to me that there was anything more strange or illegal in borrowing an incident from Scott than from the author of the *Lytell Geste*. But my attention was now aroused, and I was not surprised to come, only ten pages later, upon another vivid reminder of *Ivanhoe*. This was the siege of the Castle of Arlingford—an incident also not to be found in Peacock's acknowledged sources.

The castle is defended by Lord FitzWater with his daughter Matilda, the little round friar, and some retainers. the attackers, Prince John and his men, have constructed an immense machine on wheels for the assault, which is to take place next morning. But the garrison make a sortie, and with the support of Robin Hood's band from the forest side the machine is fired and destroyed. The description of the fight is the only serious battle piece in Peacock's novels, and quite worthy of Scott himself.

The Baron and his daughter are successfully brought off by their men and the foresters, and make good their escape towards Sherwood. Prince John intends to console himself for losing the lady by sacking the castle, but has the mortification to see it burst into flames in several places at once.

Scott gives considerably more space to his siege. but then he has a double and even treble drama to

work out within its walls. The fate of Athelstane must be in the balance, Ulrica must be avenged on Front de Bœuf; and Rebecca must picture the battle to her beloved and helpless Ivanhoe, which she does most vigorously.

After a partial success there is a lull in the attack, during which Ulrica sets fire to the magazine of fuel in the castle, and after taunting the wounded tyrant, Front de Bœuf, locks him in his room. Then, when the whole building is in flames, the Templar Bois-Guilbert makes his escape through the besiegers, followed by the remnant of his men.

So far the resemblance between these two passages is enough to interest a reader who knows both books, but only if his attention has been drawn to the parallel. It becomes, however, much more striking towards the end. When the castle of Torquilstone is burning, Scott's Anglo-Norman epic reaches its dramatic climax in this striking scene :

“ Those of the castle who had not gotten to horse still continued to fight desperately with the besiegers, after the departure of the Templar, but rather in despair of quarter than that they entertained any hope of escape. The fire was spreading rapidly through all parts of the castle, when Ulrica, who had first kindled it, appeared on a turret, in the guise of one of the ancient furies, yelling forth a war song, such as was of yore raised on the field of battle by the scalds of the yet heathen Saxons. Her long dishevelled gray hair flew back from her uncovered head; the inebriating delight of gratified vengeance contended in her eyes with the fire of insanity, and she brandished the distaff which she held in her hand, as if she had been one of the Fatal Sisters who spin and abridge the thread of human life. Tradition has preserved some wild strophes of the barbarous hymn which she chanted wildly amid that scene of fire and slaughter ”

Then comes the final picture :

" The towering flames . . . rose to the evening skies one huge and burning beacon, seen far and wide through the adjacent country . . . Tower after tower crashed down, with blazing roof and rafter . . . the victors, assembling in large bands, gazed with wonder, not unmixed with fear, upon the flames, in which their own ranks and arms glanced dusky red . . . The maniac figure of the Saxon Ulrica was for a long time visible on the lofty stand she had chosen, tossing her arms abroad with wild exultation . . . at length, with a terrific crash, the whole turret gave way, and she perished in the flames which had consumed her tyrant . . . An awful pause of horror silenced each murmur of the armed spectators, who for the space of several minutes stirred not a finger, save to sign the cross "

For a reader who had been familiar with Scott since childhood, and had had this memorable picture safely pasted into his mental picture-book for twenty years, the reflection which Peacock had foreseen was inevitable. I was instantly reminded of all the main characteristics of the scene when I read what appeared to me to be Peacock's deliberate parody of it . . . The setting is exactly the same : a castle burning in the midst of a forest landscape into which the defenders have already escaped, and in front of it a body of the besiegers looking on at the catastrophe . . . Then .

" A piteous cry was heard from within, and, while the prince was proclaiming a reward to any one who would enter into the burning pile and elucidate the mystery of the doleful voice, forth waddled the little fat friar in an agony of fear, out of the fire into the frying-pan . . . for he was instantly taken into custody and carried before Prince John, wringing his hands and tearing his hair . . . ' Are you the friar,' said Prince John in a terrible voice, ' that laid me prostrate in battle, mowed down my men like grass, rescued

my captive, and covered the retreat of my enemies ? And not content with this, have you now set fire to the castle in which I intended to take up my royal quarters ? ’

“ The little friar quaked like a jelly he fell on his knees and attempted to speak, but . . . his utterance totally failed him, and he remained gasping, with his mouth open, his lips quivering, his hands clasped together, and the whites of his eyes turned up towards the prince with an expression most ruefully imploring

“ ‘ Are you that friar ? ’ repeated the prince

“ Several of the bystanders declared that he was not that friar. . .

“ ‘ Take him away, Harpiton,’ said the prince, ‘ fill him with sack, and turn him out ’

“ ‘ Never mind the sack,’ said the little friar, ‘ turn me out at once ’

“ ‘ A sad chance,’ said Harpiton, ‘ to be turned out without sack ’

“ But what Harpiton thought a sad chance the little friar thought a merry one, and went bounding like a fat buck towards the abbey of Rubygill ”

This, I thought, after reading Peacock’s chapter, is the perfection of burlesque ; a material resemblance is established, and with it a complete spiritual difference is made to clash, with that sudden disappointment of expectation which is a well-known element in humour, and especially in boisterous humour And how well the contrast is worked out ; even after the wild figure of the ancient avenging fury has been suddenly replaced by the ludicrous apparition of the little fat friar, the parody is prolonged ; instead of Scott’s silent and awe-struck crowd, and the abiding memory of a maniac’s heroic pride, Peacock gives us a humorous group, a witty bit of dialogue, and the panic flight of the sanest and most comfort-loving type of man

There are two other passages in *Maid Marian* which I marked as worth considering along with those I have given. It will be remembered that in the early chapters of *Ivanhoe*, Prior Aymer and Bois-Guilbert are guided to Cedric's home by Wilfred of Ivanhoe disguised as a "Palmer just returned from the Holy Land" In the banquet scene in Chapter V. the conversation chances to turn on the Crusade, and the Pilgrim—in spite of his assumed humility of rank—intervenes with authentic information about King Richard and his Knights, and the haughty Templar accepts a veiled defiance from "this nameless vagrant" After supper the Pilgrim is sent for (Chapter VI) by the Lady Rowena, that she may ask for tidings of her lover, the Knight of Ivanhoe.

Similarly in Peacock's XIVth chapter it is told how "the baron, Robin and Marian disguised themselves as pilgrims returned from Palestine, and travelling from the sea-coast of Hampshire to their home in Northumberland They . . . were already on the borders of Yorkshire, when, one evening, they passed within view of a castle, where they saw a lady standing on a turret and surveying the whole extent of the valley through which they were passing. A servant came running from the castle, and delivered to them a message from his lady, who was sick with expectation of news from her lord in the Holy Land, and entreated them to come to her, that she might question them concerning him. This was an awkward occurrence; but there was no pretence for refusal, and they followed the servant into the castle The baron, who had been in Palestine in his youth, related his own adventures to the lady as having happened to the lord in question," and the lady "was delighted to find that her lord was alive and in

health, in high favour with the king and performing prodigies of valour in the name of his lady, whose miniature he always wore in his bosom. The baron guessed at this circumstance from the customs of that age, and happened to be in the right " Finally, when the lady asks him embarrassing questions concerning her lord's personal appearance, " Robin came to his aid, observing a picture suspended opposite to him on the wall, which he made a bold conjecture to be that of the lord in question ; and making a calculation of the influences of time and war, which he weighed with a comparison of the lady's eye, he gave a description of her lord sufficiently like the picture in its groundwork to be a true resemblance, and sufficiently differing from it to be more an original than a copy "

This last sentence I have always taken to be a marvellously apt description by a burlesque author of his own method, and certainly if he had intended to borrow from Scott and burlesque him at the same time, he could hardly have hoped to do it better

The three parallels which struck me, and which I have tried to exhibit here, derive a great part of their cogency from the fact that their notable likeness cannot be traced to any common ancestry of the two books. The materials known and acknowledged to have been used by Peacock do not account for them ; either they were invented and form a series of very remarkable coincidences, or they were in some way acquired from Scott. But there is a fourth parallel, which is not on quite the same footing, and yet must count for much in any theory worth considering. In the epic ballad, *The Lytell Geste*, whose eight fyttes and 456 stanzas contain the only ancient and first-rate account of Robin

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and his men that has come down to us, there is one decisive indication of a date. The King of England is Edward. In Munday's plays the reigning king is at first Henry, and afterwards his son Richard. Richard appears also in the seventeenth-century doggerel of the *Robin Hood's Garland*, and lastly in the novels of both Scott and Peacock. There is little or no doubt that the period originally assigned both by ballad writers and chroniclers to Robin's adventures was the reign of Edward the First. I shall quote three of the witnesses. Bower, writing in 1441-47 of the popularity of the Robin Hood ballads, says that Robin had been a follower of Simon, Earl of Montfort. Montfort, as every one knows, was killed at the battle of Evesham in 1265, and was held by the people of England to have died for their liberties. The remnant of his followers in the Midlands would be, naturally, popular heroes, though broken and outlawed men. Again, Wynton's *Chronicle*, some twenty years earlier in date (c. 1420), has this passage under the year 1283 (12 Ed. I)

“ Lytill John and Robin Hude  
Waythmen <sup>1</sup> were commendyd gude :  
In Yngilwode and Barnysdale  
Thai oisyd <sup>2</sup> all this tyme thare travale ”

Thirdly, in Child's monumental work on the ballads there is this note : “ J. Hunter (*Critical and Historical Tracts IV*) shows that Barnsdale was peculiarly unsafe for travellers in Edward I.'s time. Three ecclesiastics, conveyed from Scotland to Winchester, had a guard, sometimes of eight archers, sometimes of twelve, or,

<sup>1</sup> Hunters.

<sup>2</sup> Used



farther south, of none at all, but when they passed from Pontefract to Tickhill, the number was increased to twenty, *propter Barnsdale*,"—"because of Barnsdale"

The early evidence then all supports the Edwardian date of Robin Hood's historical existence: and it must be added that the *Lytell Geste* itself is a witness second to none, for it is explicit, coherent, and older by a century than all the plays and other ballads which touch this point. It is also nowhere in conflict with historical facts, as are all the sources of the Richard I. legend. Indeed, these last are witnesses who could not be relied on by any serious writer as historically competent; they give Richard a Queen named Katharine, invent Norman families of FitzOoth and FitzWater, and create earldoms of Leicester and Essex in a reign when there were none. If they are to be followed, both the *Lytell Geste* and English history must make way for them; for they offer us in Richard a king of England who was never in Barnsdale, nor long enough in England between his accession and his death to keep Robin Hood at his Court for "twelve months and three"

Why, then, did Scott and Peacock reject the older and more probable story in favour of a legend of later date which was closely interwoven with obvious genealogical and historical absurdities? Scott's reason we know, for he has given it himself in the Introduction to *Ivanhoe*, dated from Abbotsford, 1830, in the following words: "The period of the narrative adopted was the reign of Richard I., not only as abounding with characters whose very names were sure to attract general attention, but as affording a striking contrast betwixt the Saxons, by whom the soil was cultivated,

and the Normans, who still reigned in it as conquerors, reluctant to mix with the vanquished, or acknowledge themselves of the same stock. The idea of this contrast was taken from the ingenious and unfortunate Logan's tragedy of *Runnmede*" (1748-88).

On a later page he adds that the meeting between the king and Friar Tuck was taken "from the stores of old romance," and as his oldest source he quotes a ballad story of King Edward (whom he conjectures to be Edward IV) and a Hermit in Sherwood Forest. As for Robin Hood, we have already seen what he says in the Dedicatory Epistle to the original edition: "The name of Robin Hood, if duly conjured with, should raise a spirit as soon as that of Rob Roy."

No author could be franker or fuller than Scott is here, he disregards all the sixteenth-century stuff about King Richard and Queen Katharine, FitzOoth and the Earl of Leicester, he misunderstands and disregards the older story of King Edward: what he "adopts" as motive is a national contrast suggested by quite a different writer of his own time, and for his own purpose he lays his scene in a reign that suits him. No such explanation was given, or could be given, by Peacock; we must look elsewhere for his reasons for adopting the Richardian theory instead of the Edwardian. I think it is plain that he did so because it offered him an excellent villain in the person of Prince John, whom he found pursuing Matilda in Munday's plays. The king is then, of necessity, King Richard, and any historical evidence to the contrary may be thrown overboard. So far he is probably quite independent of *Ivanhoe* on this point.

But any one who cares to overlook the author of

*Maid Marian* at his work will see that he used King Richard, when he had got him, in a fashion much more like that of Scott than that of Munday or the ballad writers. In Munday the king comes to the greenwood only in the final scene, and he comes not in disguise nor in search of Robin Hood, but with all the pomp and armed train of royalty in pursuit of the usurping traitor, John. In the *Lytell Geste* he comes disguised as an abbot, with five knights in the weed of monks, to take Robin Hood if he may, being "wonder wroth" with him for shooting all his best deer. In Peacock's tale, as in Scott's, he comes as an unknown knight, is engaged in single fight by one of the outlaws, and finally—after revealing himself to Robin Hood and his whole company—furnishes the *dénouement* of the story. And here for the last time I must draw attention to a passage which is either an echo or a noticeable parallel.

Scott's picture of the disguised king is as follows: "In the meantime, the Black Champion and his guide were pacing at their leisure through the recesses of the forest. . . . You are then to imagine this Knight, such as we have already described him, strong of person, tall, broad-shouldered, and large of bone."

Peacock's runs thus: "Many moons had waxed and waned, when on the afternoon of a lovely summer day a lusty broad-boned knight was riding through the forest of Sherwood."

This is, it may be said, only a matter of a word or two, but the words seem strangely like a response to Scott's bidding—"You are then to imagine this knight."

Taken all together, I think the resemblances I have picked out from the last eleven (not the last three)

chapters of *Maid Marian* would seem to any interested reader, as they did to me, sufficiently remarkable to call for an explanation. As we have seen, the theory of a common origin in the ballads and plays will not cover these parallel passages, and any idea of conscious borrowing or burlesque by Peacock is negatived by his own statement. We are left to decide among three possible explanations. The first of these would solve everything by pure coincidence, but the coincidence here would be a singularly complex one—so complex as to be, I think, incredible. Besides, it would be for most of us unacceptable; mere coincidence is a disappointment to the inquiring mind. Two more theories remain, and both can be supported by evidence from the records of literature. The cases of unconscious reminiscence are many;—probably most of the examples of what is called the “influence” of great poets on their successors come under this head. Milton did not deliberately copy Fletcher and Spenser—he took out of his storehouse what he had long since heaped up and forgotten there. Disraeli in a famous speech used a peroration which he found in his own notebook, and remembered only afterwards that he had years before translated it from a French speech which he admired. Similarly, though on a less resounding occasion, a poet still among us, when translating a *Lai* of Marie de France, found himself writing easily in this fashion:

“ For while he numbered three swift nights  
 Within that palace of delights,  
 Three hundred years had passed on earth  
 And in the country of his birth  
 Dead was his king, his own folk dead,  
 Yea, all his lineage lapped in lead ”

It was not till some time afterwards that, in reading over a poem of Richard Barnfield's which he had first enjoyed twenty-five years before, he came with astonishment on the lines :

" King Pandion he is dead,  
All thy friends are lapped in lead "

They tell us now, and I believe it, that the unconscious self never forgets, and at times helps us in very unexpected ways. To me it seems quite possible that Peacock not only finished, but revised, his *Maid Marian* a year or two after reading *Ivanhoe*, and in so doing was quite unaware of owing Scott any acknowledgment whatever for the loan of plot, incident, or phrase. But I must admit that objections of some weight may be urged against this supposition, it would seem to be almost excluded by Peacock's introductory note. When he wrote that, he had evidently become conscious of the resemblances between his book and Scott's, and yet was still unawakened to a sense of indebtedness. Those who feel this difficulty have only one resource left ; they must accept some theory of second sight or thought-transference. Is it possible for a great imaginative mind to have a direct intuition of things past, or to be affected by the mind of another writer engaged at the same time, or earlier, upon the same subject or material or line of thought ; and this though no communication be possible between them through the ordinary channels of sense ? Such a theory would not be without support from modern poets and philosophers ; and without claiming to prove anything, I can add two instances which are verifiable beyond doubt, and may well be taken into consideration with the facts in Pea-

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cock's case First, then, take the following well-known poem, written by Mary Coleridge in 1895, and published shortly after her death in 1907 :

" Egypt's might is tumbled down  
Down a-down the deeps of thought ;  
Greece is fallen and Troy Town,  
Glorious Rome hath lost her crown,  
Venice' pride is nought

But the dreams their children dreamed,  
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain,  
Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
Airy nothing, as they deemed,  
These remain "

When these lines were written there was already in existence, though unpublished and unknown, a poem on a kindred theme and with thoughts, words, and cadences which make up just such a resemblance as those which we are now considering.

Between 1824 and 1836 John Clare wrote some stanzas on " Song's Eternity," which were published for the first time by Mr. Blunden in 1913, six years after Mary Coleridge's death The following are the last three stanzas :

" Mighty songs that miss decay,  
What are they ?  
Crowds and cities pass away  
Like a day  
Books are out and books are read,  
What are they ?  
Years will lay them with the dead—  
Sigh, sigh ;  
Trifles unto nothing wed,  
They die

Dreamers, mark the honey bee,  
     Mark the tree  
 Where the blue-cap ' *tootle-tee* '  
     Sings a glee  
 Sung to Adam and to Eve—  
     Here they be  
 When floods covered every bough,  
     Noah's ark  
 Heard that ballad singing now ;  
     Hark, hark.  
  
 ' Tootle, tootle, tootle, tee '—  
     Can it be  
 Pride and fame must shadows be ?  
     Come and see—  
 Every season own her own ;  
     Bird and bee  
 Sing Creation's music on ;  
     Nature's glee  
 Is in every mood and tone  
     Eternity "

So close is the affinity here that it is easy to imagine the  
 two poets collaborating in a poem made up of these two  
 —selecting but not altering either phrases or lines :

" Egypt's might is tumbled down,  
 Greece is fallen and Troy Town ;  
 Crowds and cities pass away  
     Like a day.

But the dreams their children dreamed,  
 Shadowy as the shadows seemed,  
 Mighty songs that miss decay,  
     What are they ?

Dreamers, mark the honey bee,  
     Can it be  
 Pride and fame must shadows be ?  
     Come and see.

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Books are out and books are read,  
Years will lay them with the dead,  
Trifles unto nothing wed,  
Fleeting, unsubstantial, vain—  
These remain "

Here the thought may be regarded as transferred from one mind to another, distant in both time and space, or the earlier poem may be supposed to have been perceived as an existing fact by the intuitive power of a later writer, in either case the process is one which goes on below, above, or beyond the reasoning consciousness of the individual. It is unfortunate that so little trouble is taken to investigate scientifically the stories and beliefs connected with what is called "second sight," for they are often interesting in themselves, and sometimes appear as presenting the only possible solution of indisputable facts—such facts, for example, as those which I shall now relate. Mary Coleridge's novel, *The King with Two Faces*, appeared in the autumn of 1897, and within a few months became widely famous. The scene is laid in Sweden, and the story is concerned with the adventures of Adolf Ribbing, the young Swedish nobleman who in 1792 took part in the assassination of the king, Gustavus III, at a ball. It seemed therefore natural enough that Count von L, then Swedish Minister in London, should express a desire to meet the authoress. The interview took place on February 3, 1898, at Lord Knutsford's house in Eaton Square; and there were present, besides Lady Knutsford and the two principals, Miss Coleridge's sister and two of her intimate friends. The Count began by complimenting the authoress upon her book, and especially upon the vivid pictures of the scenery of Dalecarlia in the earlier chapters, where, he



said, she had surpassed all previous attempts at rendering the character of the country. He was astonished to hear, in reply to a question, that Miss Coleridge had never in her life visited any part of Sweden, and he seemed to have some further question in mind. After an interval the rest of us removed to a little distance, and he then asked if Miss Coleridge would tell him by whom she had been informed of an important fact in her story. The assassination of the king, the escape of Adolf Ribbing, and his capture after a price had been put upon his head—these were matters of history. But that he had been betrayed for a reward by his own intimate friend, a young nobleman of his own age—this was a skeleton which had hitherto been carefully kept hidden in the darkest cupboard of the informer's family. Who was it that had now given up the secret after a hundred years? The Count was entitled to ask, for he was himself a great-nephew of the man in question.

The answer was more astonishing than before. Miss Coleridge had received no information on this point from historians or from private sources. Improbable as the incident was, inconsistent with the character of Adolf's friend, and unnecessary to the story, she had written it so because so it came into her mind, inexplicably but convincingly; she saw it so. The Count was too good a diplomatist to argue further, he bowed, and accepted the lady's statement as a claim to second sight.

I need not comment on these two instances; my purpose in this paper is not to develop an argument, but to make two suggestions. One is that the charge of plagiarism or imitation should be less often made, and the word "derivative" as the antithesis to "original" given up altogether. There are in literature examples of conscious

imitation, sedulous aping, great and wily borrowing. But they are not common, and though dangerous, they are in no way fraudulent, nor do they even point inevitably to a lack of original creative power. The spiritual activity of the artist works by intuition and representation. His material may be supplied by external events, by inward experience of his own, or by the transmitted experience of others; in any case there must be material, the artist does not make it; he transmutes it, and originality cannot depend upon the source of it. On the contrary, it depends upon the freshness of the result, the characteristic form, colour, and atmosphere of the new world created. A poet may "borrow"—as Shakespeare constantly did—subject, metrical form, and even verbal phrases, and yet be far more original than his originals. Every artist knows this, and takes his material wherever he finds it. In most cases he does not "borrow" at all; he picks up the sticks he finds, whether of his own tree or another's, and stacks them in his basement against the day of need, then draws forth what is wanted to feed his own fire, unconsciously. No one is robbed or wronged by this; in the realm of Art you can feel another's work, but you cannot steal it.

The other suggestion which I make is concerned with those parallels or resemblances which cannot be explained by any contact in the material world between two authors. In such cases as that of Peacock and Scott, let us not only refrain from accusation, but look for some better explanation than coincidence. The truth is that coincidence is only a word to cover our ignorance of causes. The trout in a river pool may think it a strange coincidence if two—stranger still if a dozen—

of their number disappear successively into the upper air with convulsive struggles. The fisherman concealed on the bank above knows better—knows all—for he is the cause. He has powers beyond the reach of their inquiry. We are not fish, and there is no reason why we should cease our inquiry till we have found out what it is that happens to us in artistic creation, and the cause beyond ourselves. If that cause should prove to be the universal of ourselves, the infinite sum and source of all our powers, we shall have found not only the explanation of some of our literary resemblances, but the secret of Time and Eternity, and of the twofold nature of the world.

## II. SOME POETS AND THEIR SCENERY

HOW large a volume might be written on types of human error. And how entertaining would be the chapter on poetical fallacies: by which I mean, of course, the fallacies, not of poets, but of critics of poetry, whether professional or private. Perhaps the principal section of this chapter would be devoted to the great archæological fallacy. for it is a fallacy that is twice blessed—it blesseth him that gives it his ingenuous devotion and him that takes it humorously as a spectacle of fatuity. What a joy, for example, it must be for an archæologist to find in Denmark not only a town called Elsinore, but a spot in the garden of the hotel pointed out to customers as the grave of Hamlet, or to discover, as some one did last year, a letter of 1809 stating that Sir John Moore was buried at Corunna in the afternoon, and therefore *not* by the struggling moonbeam's misty light and the lanthorn dimly burning. On the other hand, how we chuckle over the modern innkeeper who indignantly vociferates—"I know nothing about your Mr. Dickens, but how can you say that Mr. Pickwick was not a real person, when I tell you he stayed in this very inn?" And how pleasant to hear a learned Dane, Mr. Johannes Jensen, scornfully hurling Shakespeare the poet at the archæologists—"The realm of imagina-

tion, *that* was to him ' *my Denmark* ', nor is there any other Denmark in it " Shall we pause here for a moment to agree with Mr Jensen upon this that whatever bits of clay the poet may take from the common earth as raw material, it is always a new world—his own world, his own Denmark—that he makes with them? And then shall we walk for a little way through the scenery of some pastoral poets, where we are sure to find an archæologist or two digging in the dark for a black fact which isn't there?

" Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi  
 Silvestrem tenui musam meditaris avena  
 Nos patriæ fines et dulcia linquimus arva,  
 Nos patriam fugimus tu Tityre lentus in umbra  
 Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas "

[“ Tityrus, you lying under the spreading beech-tree’s roof, are practising your woodland tunes upon your slender pipe of straw we cross the border and leave the fields we love we fly our fatherland, you, Tityrus, stretched in the shade at ease, make the woods resound with the name of beautiful Amaryllis ”]

These, as every one knows, are the opening lines of the first of Virgil’s Eclogues; and they deserve the epithet “ momentous,” for though simple enough in superficial meaning, they have carried as far as almost any that were ever written. The Eclogues made Virgil’s fame when he was but thirty—a fame which grew until in the Middle Ages it became a European legend without a parallel. These poems were received in the Roman world with universal delight, and even, it would seem, with some unconscious recognition of Virgil’s true significance in the progress of poetry—they were, as

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Dr Mackail has said, the real turning-point not only between two periods of Latin literature, but between two worlds. In them is first heard that "note of brooding pity," that tone of underlying thought, which among all the beauty and gaiety of the much-loved earth reminds us tenderly of the love and sadness that are in mortal life. So different is this note from any in the older Roman literature that it gave freshness and originality to a set of poems which were in outward form a young poet's "close and careful imitations" of the much older Greek poetry of Theocritus. No doubt the deliberate resemblance combined with the spiritual newness to delight and stir Virgil's audience then as now. For 1,900 years he was acclaimed as the greatest of Latin poets. Then came the age of science, unfortunately also the age of applied science, and even of misapplied science. Literary critics began to talk of racial qualities in poetry, one, I remember, gained credit by attributing some of the most attractive lines in the *Ode to a Nightingale* to "a Celtic element" in John Keats. At last, after English poetry had been carefully searched for Celtic elements, a consensus of professors, mostly German, turned their attention to Virgil, and offered evidence to prove his Celtic descent. Of this evidence I will only say here that none of it would convince a scientific or judicial mind, while much of it is merely amusing as an example of logical method. Virgil was born at Andes, or Vicus Andicus; Andicus is certainly Celtic, for Caesar mentions a tribe of that name in Gaul. You see the argument: if John Smith was born in London, and Londinium was a Roman settlement, then John Smith must be of Roman descent. Again, Virgil's parents were named Vergilius Maro and

Magia Polla, his brothers Flaccus and Silo. Silo is a Celtic name; Magia is sometimes found united with a Celtic cognomen. On the other hand, Flaccus is Latin, so is Polla, and Magia is found much more often with Latin cognomina. Vergilius itself is almost certainly Latin or Etruscan, and Virgil's pride in the Etruscan origin of Mantua seems to point to a belief in his own Etruscan ancestry. So far the evidence is conflicting. But there is yet a *pièce de conviction* left—the family surname, Maro. Maro, says Professor Zwicker, is defined in Du Cange's *Glossary* as "*Via præmonstrator*"—one who goes before to show the way, an Alpine guide in fact, and therefore of Gaelic descent. Again you see the argument: the word "rider" means a rider of horses, in fact a rider of Arab horses, and Arab horses come from Arabia; therefore a family whose surname is Ryder must be of Arabian origin. We need not trouble further with the name Maro, except perhaps to remark that according to two other German authorities, Schulze and Corssen, it is the Latin form of Maru, as Caspo is of Caspu, and these names in -u are Etruscan, not Celtic. And of the supposed Celtic traits in Virgil's poems I am content to note Dr Mackail's dictum, that it is quite unnecessary to assume a Celtic origin for any new birth of the romantic element.

The Celtic affinity of Virgil is therefore at present unproved, and even improbable. If it were proved it would still be irrelevant, for the romantic poetry of the world is not entirely or mostly the gift of the Celtic race. It may be wondered why I stopped for a moment to examine a theory of so little literary importance. The reason is that this theory was the origin of another, much more interesting. The search for ancient names,

the digging for inscriptions in North Italy, incidentally led one of our own professors, Mr G. E K Braunholtz, to believe that he had found evidence of the true site of Virgil's farm and birthplace. His suggestion has been taken up and illustrated by Professor Seymour Conway with so much learning and enthusiasm that other lovers of Virgil have been led to join the hunt—I may say myself that the sound of his horn brought me from my bed, and that I greatly enjoyed the run, though I came at last to the conclusion that it was a drag and not a live fox that we were chasing.

Let me state the few facts which form our starting-point. Virgil was born on the 15th of October in the year 70 B C. His father was a small freeholder who farmed his own land, and practised forestry and bee-keeping. The land was in the territory of the town of Mantua in Cisalpine Gaul, which was then thoroughly Romanized and formed a principal recruiting ground for the Roman legions. As for the site of the farm, we are told by Servilius, who wrote about 500 years later, that it was at Andes; and by Dante, who wrote about 900 years after Servilius, that Andes is the same as Pietöla, now Pietöle, nearly three miles to the south-east of Mantua. These statements are, of course, tradition rather than evidence; but they have been accepted by the countrymen of Virgil and Dante all through the centuries, and a monument now stands near Pietöle recording the historic belief.

Virgil succeeded his father in the possession of the farm, and was beyond doubt much attached to his home. But when he was only twenty-eight, a young poet with friends of note, but himself without renown, he was suddenly dispossessed. In 42 B C, after the final



battle of Philippi, it became necessary for Augustus to settle his ex-service men on the land. He decided to take for this purpose the territory of Cremona, which had been hostile to him, but as this was insufficient in extent, the lands of Mantua were also encroached upon, not because Mantua had been disloyal, but because her territory was near—too near—to that of Cremona. Virgil complained to friends who had the power to help him; Asinius Pollio spoke to Augustus—it appears that he put Virgil's case as that of a deserving poet—and the deserving poet was told that he might remain. But the story does not end there. An ex-service man—a centurion named Arrius—had acquired, or thought that he had acquired, a right to Andes, and finding Virgil back on his farm in 40 B.C., he took a short way with the poet—in fact, threw him into the river. Virgil fled, and appealed to Cæsar, who compensated him by the grant of a farm in Apulia—possibly a good farm, but so far away as to be, in the language of Virgil's grief, beyond the border of his own country altogether.

These troubles naturally left their mark on Virgil and his work—that is, on the poems which he was writing then and shortly afterwards. He was too good a poet to tell his story directly or put his case or argue it, what he did was to use it as part of his material for the little volume of bucolic poems in which he was so closely and carefully imitating Theocritus. In his First Eclogue, from which I have already quoted, the unhappy Melibœus, like many of Virgil's neighbours, is being expelled from his old home: the more fortunate Tityrus, like Virgil, has been reprieved by a god who lives in Rome, a prince who in reply to his prayer gave immediate reply—

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“ Pasture your oxen as of old.”

•  
Melibœus envies him :

“ Happy in your old age ! so your fields will remain your own and ample enough for you, though all the pastures be covered with bare stone or muddy rush of the fen . . . Happy in your old age ! Here among familiar streams and sacred springs you will woo the coolness of the shade here the hedge that ever keeps your neighbour's boundary, where bees of Hybla feed their fill on the willow blossom, shall often with light murmuring lull you into sleep, here under the lofty rock shall rise the leaf-plucker's song nor all the while shall the loud wood-pigeons that you love, cease to moan, nor the turtle-dove from the elm tree's airy top . . . But we ! some of us shall pass hence to thirsty Africa, some reach Scythia and the swift Cretan Oaxes, and the Britons, sundered wholly from all the world . . . Shall a lawless soldier possess these trim fallows, a barbarian these cornfields ? To what a wretched pass has civil discord brought us ! Go, my she goats, go, once happy flock . never hereafter shall I, stretched in a green cave, see you in the distance hanging from the tufted rock . no songs shall I sing not in my herding shall you, my she goats, crop the flowering cytissus and bitter willows ”

And Tityrus replies as none but Virgil could reply :

“ Yet here for to-night you might rest with me on green boughs we have mellow apples and soft chestnuts and curds of milk in abundance , and already afar off the smoke rises from the farm roofs, and from the high mountains the shadows longer fall ”

Eclogue IX gives another dialogue on the same theme of forced exile, with slightly different circumstances and entirely different persons—Lycidas and Mœris. Mœris is the servant of a farmer, Menalcas, who is not present

Lycidas asks him—

“ ‘ Whither are you footing, Mœris ? Does your way take you townward ? ’ ”

“ ‘ O Lycidas, we have lived to come to this, what we never feared, that an intruder on our little fields should say, “ These are mine ; away with you, you that have tilled them so long ! ” ’ ”

“ ‘ Surely,’ says Lycidas, ‘ I had heard that where the hills begin to come down and lower their ridge into a gentle slope, even to the waterside and the old beeches that now moulder at the top, your Menalcas had saved all the land by his songs. ’ ”

“ ‘ You had,’ says Mœris, ‘ and so rumour ran But songs of ours, Lycidas, have no more power among warring arms than Chaonian doves, as they say, when the eagle comes. Had not a raven from the hollow ilex on my left forewarned me to cut short fresh quarrels as best I could, neither your Mœris nor Menalcas himself would be alive and here. ’ ”

“ *Lycidas.* Alas ! can such wickedness come over any one ? Alas, for you and our comfort in you, Menalcas, so nearly lost to us ! Who would sing the nymphs . . . or those songs I caught of late from you on your way to our darling Amaryllis ? ”

“ *Mœris.* Nay, those rather which all unfinished as they were we used to sing to Varus . Varus, if but our Mantua survive,—Mantua, ah ! too near a neighbour to unhappy Cremona—singing swans shall bear thy name to the stars above ”

They sing and talk a little longer, till Lycidas breaks off—

“ Your talking prolongs our desire : and now see all the broad water is smooth and still, and every breath of the murmuring breeze has fallen From this point is just half our road, for Bianor’s tomb begins to show here where rustics are stripping the thick-leaved sprays, here, Mœris,

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let us sing , here set down thy kids : for all that, we shall reach the town Or if we fear lest night ere then gather to rain, we may go singing all the way, and the road weary us the less that we may go singing, I will lighten you of this bundle "

In this sketch, too, there are several points at which the story seems to resemble the story of Virgil's second expulsion, and his rough handling by the brutal centurion. But nothing is said of that undignified episode of the ducking, and in other ways, too, the poetical picture differs from the prosaic one as every work of art differs from its raw material. It is possible that our archæological friends might have agreed with us here, but they came under a special temptation. Conington and Ramsay had long ago expressed a belief that Pietöle was not rightly identified with the Andes which was Virgil's birthplace; knowing this, and having collected in their Celtic inquiry two inscriptions from places far west of Mantua, one containing the name Vergilia and the other the name Magius, our archæologists thought they saw the possibility of establishing a more authentic Virgilian farm in a more suitable position. The place where the altar of Vergilia was found is a tiny town called Calvisano, and it was accordingly in the neighbourhood of Calvisano that Professor Conway looked for, and in his own belief found, the countryside in which Virgil was born and spent the early years of his life. I cannot too earnestly commend to you the treatise in which he puts forth his argument with enviable learning and industry, and I am especially grateful to him for inciting me to visit the country near Mantua and view the proposed Virgilian site for myself. My purpose was not to examine inscriptions; these and the

interpretations of them I was glad to accept from such excellent scholars as the plaintiffs, but I wished to place myself under the same local influences as those by which they had been convinced, and to apply one or two tests to the chief evidence by which their case must, I think, stand or fall

First came the main line of argument That Andes cannot be Pietöle because the scenery and nature of the land at Pietöle does not show the same characteristics as those described in the Eclogues On the other hand, those characteristics are to be found, in Professor Conway's opinion, at Carpenédolo near Calvisano.

Secondly, there is a statement by the critic Valerius Probus, who wrote between 120 and 150 years after Virgil, that Andes was thirty Roman miles from Mantua—that is, about eight-and-twenty English miles. If this could be accepted as true, it would, of course, rule out Pietöle But I found at once, and I wonder that Professor Conway has not found also, a very formidable difficulty in the way of accepting the thirty miles It is this . The territory of Mantua at the present day does not extend, in any direction north of the Po, to a distance of anything like thirty miles from the town. And all the Italian authorities whom I have consulted are agreed that this was always the case Especially do they assert that Calvisano and Carpenédolo and all the land near them are, and have always been, Brescian territory, and in fact the altar of Vergilia, from which Professor Conway's argument took its origin, is preserved in the museum, not of Mantua, but of its own mother city of Brescia. Before Pietöle can be discarded in favour of Carpenédolo some further evidence, some quite revolutionary evidence, on this point must be produced

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I suggest that a simpler way out of this discrepancy would be to read III for XXX —three miles for thirty—in the text of Probus, a copyist may well have made such an error. But the first point was the one which took me most, for it involved the literary question, and necessitated the viewing of the country itself. Before starting from Garda I read through the Eclogues, and made a note of the landscape details which the archæologists demand as certificates of the true Andes, the authentic Virgilian scenery. They are these:

- (1) Spreading beeches, and old broken-topped beeches, old oaks, struck by lightning; pines, white poplars, junipers, old hollow ilexes, lofty elms, apple and chestnut trees
- (2) Springs, caves and grottos, high rocks overhanging, hazels among bare rock, land with bare stone showing, high mountains casting long shadows at sunset
- (3) Marshy lands and reeds: wide smooth meres near the city, and that city Mantua, within a walk from the farm for a herdsman leading she-goats and carrying kids in his arms

With this catalogue and a pocket Virgil I made the round of the country west and north of Mantua, noting the various trees, the character of the landscape, and the height of the ground above sea-level. Of the trees it is enough to say that they are everywhere at present of a completely un-Virgilian character, the hedges are of maple and other small stuff as with us, the farms are principally planted with the mulberry—a small squat tree. Timber or forest trees are rare, and I saw none of any age or size, except in the city of Mantua itself. Of the towns which I visited, Lonato is 98 metres above

sea-level, Montichiari 104, Calvisano 63, Carpenédolo 122, Castiglione 200, Solferino 206, Pozzolago 135, Peschiera 76; this last being the level of the Lago di Garda, it will be seen that the whole country is low and flat to the view, with low rounded hills towards the north of no great size—that on the top of which Carpenédolo stands is, for example, a much less striking mountain than the Hampstead heights, it rises less than 200 feet above the river Chiese, while Hampstead is more than 400 feet above the Thames. In such a neighbourhood you will look in vain, as I looked in vain, for anything like an overhanging rock, a cave or grotto, and you will see no long shadows cast by high mountains, because there are no mountains there.

When we come to the third part of our list of desiderata the case becomes more disputable still—in fact, the evidence runs all the other way. At Carpenédolo there are no marshes, no reeds, no expanses of water to walk from there to Mantua would be a march of thirty miles as the crow flies, and far more as the goat trots with her kids, especially as she must cross two rivers which cannot be forded, and have, as they doubtless then had, very few bridges. These two rivers, I may add, are neither of them the Mincio, Virgil's beloved river, nor tributaries of it, they have a distant and parallel course and fall into the Po. If Virgil had lived to the west of the Chiese, he might perhaps have heard of Mincio, but he would never have spoken of it as his own in the moving tones that we know. Finally, if there is one bit of scenery for which he did draw upon the memory of his old home, it is that in Eclogue IX., which I have already quoted—that where he tells of the approach to the city by a road running along the side

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of a smooth level lagoon or broad-water ; and where he makes his shepherds say as they catch sight of the tomb of Bianor (the legendary founder of Mantua) that they are half-way on their journey and can be sure of getting there by nightfall. If their starting-place had been near Pietöle their tramp would be three miles in all—a reasonable effort for kids and their mothers, and half-way would mean a mile and a half—a reasonable distance from which to catch sight of a historic monument.

But it is no part of my case to argue in favour of Pietöle, I do not even suggest that the lagoons I saw are Virgil's poetical lagoons, or that there ever was a tomb of Bianor outside the Mantua of our world. I only say that the argument from the scenery of the Eclogues is wholly irrelevant. I know quite certainly where Virgil got that tomb, and where he saw his hanging rocks, his caves, his springs and poplars and many other beautiful things which he could not find in his native plain. He did not go to Brescia for them, he went to Theocritus, and mixed them with his own less picturesque Mantuan memories to make the scenery of his new and immortal world. It is the way of poets :

“ In every land thy feet may tread  
Time like a veil is round thy head.  
Only the land thou seek'st with me  
Never hath been nor yet shall be ”

Why then should we think to connect such a land, the land created by a poet, with what we are pleased to call “ the real world ” ?

Let us go back for a moment to Sicily, the eternal Sicily that two hundred years before Virgil was born



Theocritus made for Syracuse and for us and for ever .

Ἄδύ τι τὸ ψιθύρισμα καὶ ἃ πίτυς ἀπὸ δὲ τήνα  
ἃ ποτι τᾶις παγαῦσι μελίσσεται, ἄδδ δὲ καὶ τὴν  
συρίσδες

[“ Sweet is the whispering sound of yonder pine tree, goatherd, and sweet too is thy piping.”]

And the goatherd replies :

“ Sweeter, O Shepherd, is thy song than the music of yonder water that falleth from the high face of the rock  
Come hither and beneath yonder elm let us sit down, in face of Priapus and the fountain fairies, where is the resting-place of the shepherds and where the oak trees are ”

This is in the First Idyll : in the Third another goatherd sings :

“ Ah ! lovely Amaryllis, why peep you no more as of old from your cave and call me in ? ”

And in the Sixth the nymph Galatea

“ Springs madly from the sea, gazing at my caves and at my herds.”

In these, too, we see the goats cropping the cytissus and the boys whistling on pipes of straw stopped with wax. Idyll VII. gives us still more of what we are looking for :

“ Once upon a time went Eucritus and I (Simichidas) and with us too Amyntas from the town to the Haleis . . . to a harvest feast holden that day unto Deo by Phrasidamus and Antigenes, sons of Lycopus . . . who came of that very Chalcon who beneath his foot made the fountain he set his knee stoutly against the rock and straightway

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by the spring poplars and elm trees showed a shadowy glade ,  
arched overhead they grew, and pleasant with leaves of  
green We had not yet reached the mid-point of the way,  
nor was the tomb of Brasília yet arisen upon our sight when  
by grace of the Muses we overtook a fine fellow of Cydonia ,  
Lycidas was his name, a goatherd was he, nor could any  
that saw him have taken him for other than he was . . .  
Stripped from the roughest of he-goats was the tawny skin  
he wore on his shoulders, the smell of rennet clinging to it  
still, and about his breast an old cloak was buckled with a  
plaited belt In his right hand he carried a crookt staff of  
wild olive and quietly he accosted me with a smile, a  
twinkling eye, and a laugh still on his lips ' Simichidas,  
whither, pray, through the noon dost thou trail thy feet,  
when even the very lizard on the wall is sleeping, and the  
crested larks no longer fare afield ? ' ' ' <sup>1</sup>

Lycidas replies, and they ask him for a song, to which  
he consents, and in his song pictures his friend Tityrus  
singing to *him*—

“ How once upon a time the great chest prison'd the  
living goatherd, Comatas, by his master's infatuate and  
evil will, and how the blunt-faced bees, as they came up  
from the meadow to the fragrant cedar chest, fed him with  
food from tender flowers, because the Muse ever dropped  
sweet nectar on his lips ”

Then he breaks out—

“ O blessed Comatas, surely these joyful things *did* befall  
thee, and thou *wast* enclosed within the chest and fed on  
honeycomb through the Spring-time, and so didst serve  
out thy bondage Ah ! would that in my days thou hadst  
been numbered with the living—how gladly on the hills  
would I have herded thy pretty she-goats and listened to  
thy voice, whilst thou under oaks and pine trees lying,  
didst sweetly sing, Comatas ! ”

<sup>1</sup> From Dr. Mackail's translation.

Then Simichidas sings in turn, and Lycidas leaves them, and Simichidas and Eucritus and Amyntás go to the farm and picnic there, lying on deep beds of fragrant nut-branches and vine leaves .

“ And high above our heads waved many a poplar, many an elm tree, while close at hand the sacred water from the Nymphs’ own cave welled forth with murmurs musical. On shadowy boughs the bunt cicalas kept up their chattering toil, and aloof in the tangled brake the tree-frog made his churrup; the ring-dove moaned, the yellow bees were fitting round the springs. All breathed the scent of summer, very rich, and the scent of autumn fruits, pears at our feet and apples by our sides were rolling plentiful, the tender branches laden with wild plums were earthward bowed, and the four-year-old seal of pitch was loosened from the mouth of the wine-jars.”

Wine was not all they drank .

“ Such a draught as ye Nymphs gave us that day from your spring, there by the altar of Demeter of the threshing-floor. Ah ! once again may I plant the great winnowing fan on her corn-heap, while she stands smiling by with sheaves and poppies in her hands.”

Whether as song or as picture, this idyll of the Harvest Feast is, I think, perfect—a perfect example of the oneness of form and creative imagination. Theocritus certainly has not, as Virgil has, that sense of tears, that still sad music of humanity ; but he has a joy in the beauty of earth, and a vision of the human and divine life which haunts it, that no Roman ever had. You will not find in Virgil any portrait like that of Lycidas, nor any such sense of the characters and intercourse of men, nor any fairies in the woods nor visible figures of august and smiling gods, standing like Demeter by the

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corn-heap of any little farm. These Idylls belong to the poetry of unmixed gold ; they are, in the old use of the word, sincere.

Virgil's Eclogues, too, have sincerity of feeling, or they would never have so stirred and changed the Roman mind. But their sincerity is not so full, so unmixed with alien stuff. Some of Virgil's scenery, some of his best phrases, and of course all his wonderful rhythms and cadences, are his own. But his names, his rocks and caves and scenery, are mostly borrowed from Theocritus, imported from the Sicily of a day long past. The importation is done by a "great and wily borrower," but it makes the poems a little less vital, a little more artificial, than they might have been. Incidentally it has also made it difficult for archæologists to distinguish between what is relevant for their purpose and what is not.

The case of the Eclogues is not an isolated one. Theocritus first, and Virgil after him, had shown the world what an admirable form was that of pastoral poetry, how pleasing to the ear and eye, how full of incidental opportunities, and above all how capable of expressing one of the most universal moods of men—that which dwells on country scenes with a momentary and impossible belief in a golden age. It was inevitable that others should follow the tradition ; and they have done so even in our own country, where we have little in the way of sunburnt cicalas or practicable caves, and where if any goddess stands by the threshing machine it is Moneta rather than Demeter—and Moneta does not smile on poppies. But it is interesting to watch our pastoral poets struggling with the same problem, the same temptation which befell Virgil

They also are too often led to use alien material; they borrow not only the traditional form, which is eternal, but the local names and details, which are temporal and second-hand. They even borrow scenery and customs which are fatally out of place in the English landscape they are presenting. In a word, they are to some extent not sincere but conventional.

The struggle for sincerity is clearly visible in Edmund Spenser. In his poem *Colin Clout's Come Home Again* he describes himself as—

“ The Shepherd's boy (best known by that name)  
That after Tityrus first sang his lay ”

And then, with his “ oaten pipe ” in hand, he goes off singing of the Irish scenery and Irish names among which he had been spending years—“ Mulla's shore ” and “ my river Bregog ” and “ Mole running down to Buttevant ” where spreading forth at length—

“ It giveth name unto that antient city  
Which Kilnemullah clepèd is of old.”

And among all these he mingles such names as Proteus, and Cynthia, and Astrophel—Greek names, but denoting persons very like his own contemporaries—as like as Tityrus or Menalcas are in circumstance to Virgil.

In the *Shepherd's Calendar* it would almost seem as though Spenser had seen the danger of confusing his own sincerity by a too devoted attempt to follow his Roman master. His shepherds are named Colin, Diggon, Piers, and Cuddy. In the verses for June he gives a purely English landscape :

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“ Lo, Colin, here the place whose pleasant sight  
From other shades hath wean'd my wandering mind.  
Tell me what wants me here to work delight?  
The simple air, the gentle warbling wind  
So calm, so cool as nowhere else I find,  
The grassy ground with dainty daisies dight,  
The bramble bush, where birds of every kind  
To the water's fall their tunes attemper right ”

In October he actually names the Augustans and disclaims them :

“ Indeed, the Romish Tityrus I hear  
Through his Mæcnas left his oaten reed  
Whereon he erst had taught his flocks to feed  
And laboured lands to yield the timely ear,  
And erst did sing of wars and deadly dreed  
So as the heavens did quake his verse to hear.

But ah ! Mæcnas is yclad in clay  
And great Augustus long ygo is dead  
And all the Worthies liggen wrapt in lead  
That matter made for poets on to play :  
For ever who in derring-do were dread  
The lofty verse of them was lovèd aye.”

Yet Spenser had his own peculiar touch of convention, he was a little too much of an archæologist in language, and this has always, for some readers, veiled his poetry. Pope spoils with a far more grotesque travesty whatever perception of the Greek he may have received through Virgil. His own Pastorals have many merits ; but their faults are glaringly illuminated by his own theory of the relation between poetry and nature. In his *Discourse on Pastoral Poetry* he says :

“ A Pastoral is an imitation of the action of a Shepherd, or one considered under that character . . . an image of that

they call the golden age            so that we are not to describe our shepherds as shepherds at this day really are, but as they may be conceived then to have been, when the best of men followed the employment            it would not be amiss to give these shepherds some skill in astronomy, as far as it may be useful to that sort of life    And an air of piety to the gods            and some relish of the old way of writing . . . But nothing more conduces to make these composures natural than when some knowledge in rural affairs is discovered    This may be made to appear rather done by chance than on design . . . We must use therefore some illusion to render a Pastoral delightful, and this consists in exposing the best side only of a shepherd's life, and in concealing its miseries . . . It is from the practice of Theocritus and Virgil (the only undisputed authors of Pastoral) that the Critics have drawn the foregoing notions concerning it "

Pope, I believe, had no such knowledge of Greek as might have enabled him to appreciate Theocritus. In any case he did not succeed in extracting a clear and consistent doctrine from him. In the *Essay on Criticism* he begins by praising Nature as the true fountain of artistic excellence :

" First follow Nature, and your judgment frame  
By her just standard, which is still the same :  
Unerring Nature, still divinely bright,  
One clear unchang'd and universal light,  
Life force and beauty must to all impart—  
At once the source and end and test of Art "

But he has this unfortunate afterthought, when the recollection returns to him that he is after all the poet of the new Augustan Age, and bound to be its apologist :

" Those rules of old discover'd, not devis'd,  
Are Nature still, but Nature methodiz'd."

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Even this could have been interpreted in a favourable sense if he had not published Pastorals of his own. They are Pastorals which may still be read with pleasure, but as illustrations of the doctrine of Nature methodiz'd rather than of Nature the one clear unchang'd and universal light. The First Pastoral begins thus :

“ First in these fields I try the sylvan strains  
Nor blush to sport on Windsor's blissful plains :  
Fair Thames flow gently from thy sacred spring  
While on thy banks Sicilian Muses sing :  
Let vernal airs thro' trembling osiers play  
And Albion's cliffs resound the rural lay.”

After this follows a compliment to Sir William Trumbal, one of those poets who can never be forgotten because they have never been remembered ; they tune the lyre in their native shades—a charmingly adroit phrase .

“ O let my Muse her slender reed inspire  
Till in your native shades you tune the lyre .  
So when the Nightingale to rest removes  
The Thrush may chant to the forsaken groves,  
But charm'd to silence, listens while she sings  
And all th' aerial audience clap their wings ”

Then, without pause or transition, two swains sing in a contest for a wager in the familiar Theocritean fashion ; one stakes a lamb, the other a carven bowl. One of them, Strephon, goes further and offers Apollo something handsome if he will help him win , while at the same time, the author, always adroit, contrives to flatter another of his own contemporaries :

“ Inspire me, Phœbus, in my Delia's praise  
With Waller's strains, or Granville's moving lays !



A milk-white bull shall at your altars stand  
That threatens a fight, and spurns the rising sand "

The archæologists of a thousand years hence will find these lines very interesting. They will dig for altars and inscriptions in Windsor Park ; and when no altars can be found, perhaps one of the cleverer of them will discover some fragmentary notice of bulls having been sacrificed, in or near Pope's time, at a place called Wembley Park. Wembley may be the Celtic form of Windsor ; at any rate there is a park at each, and the two places are not so far apart as Mantua and Carpenédolo. It is our misfortune that we know better ; for us the only bulls sacrificed at Windsor are those killed by Mr. Bones the butcher.

Even if we did not know this the secret of Pope's Windsor scenery would be revealed by his Third Pastoral :

" Beneath the shade a spreading Beech displays  
Hylas and Ægon sung their rural lays. . . "

Hylas comes first with " melodious moan " about " the feather'd quires " and " pleasing shades " and " gentle gales " of the early eighteenth century ; and " Next Ægon sung, while Windsor groves admir'd " :

" Here where the mountains less'ning as they rise  
Lose the low vales, and steal into the skies .  
While lab'ring oxen, spent with toil and heat  
In their loose traces from the field retreat,  
While curling smoaks from village tops are seen  
And the fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green "

We need not dig for evidence as to these " curling smoaks " and " village tops " and " fleet shades " of

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evening ; we have seen them less than half an hour ago in Virgil's country—the country where he placed them for himself ; and we are not surprised to find them again in Pope's own Windsor, where Ægon proposes to end his miserable life of unrequited affection :

“ Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful lay !  
Farewell, ye woods, adieu the light of day !  
One leap from yonder cliff shall end my pains,  
No more, ye hills, no more resound my strains ! ”

There are many interesting things at Windsor : one is the classical temple at Virginia Water, erected by the Duke of Cumberland, another is Ægon's cliff, erected by Pope, brought over from Sicily by way of Mantua. I am not forgetting that Pope was very young when he wrote his Pastorals ; but we cannot dismiss even the early poems of so great a writer as negligible—they must be judged by the one poetical standard. These Pastorals are artificial, they lack sincerity. On the other hand they have merit, and the merit is Pope's, while the fault is largely the fault of his generation. He was brought up in a fashion, and bound to follow it, like Virgil, he had to make his Pastorals acceptable by obvious imitation of the Old Masters. In using the traditional form he was amply justified ; and in reminding his readers of this by introducing some of the old phrases, ideas, and names he was doing no harm. But when he mixed in with these a purely conventional scenery, and long obsolete or foreign customs, he was appealing to fashion and polite learning, instead of to those feelings which are concerned with poetry.

It was left to a poet of our own day to take up once

more this old and beautiful form, and to renew the tradition of the Golden Age by Idylls—little pictures—whose sincerity is part of their beauty. In the first of his Eclogues Mr Bridges shows us the meeting of Basil and Edward—two Englishmen, poets and intimate friends :

“ But now again were these fine lovers met,  
And sat together on a rocky hill,  
Looking upon the vales of Somerset  
Where the fair sea gleam'd o'er the bosky combes,  
Satisfying their spirits the livelong day,  
With various mirth and revelation due,  
And delicate intimacy of delight,  
As there in happy indolence they lay  
And drank the sun, while round the breezy height  
Beneath their feet rabbit and listless ewe  
Nibbled the scented herb and grass at will ”

This is England—the poet's England, the poet's Somerset—and not a word in it of Sicily Yet there is a far sea and a breezy cliff and summer sun and flocks feeding ; it is a dream haunted by an older dream :

“ μή μοι γὰν Πέλοπος μή μοι χρύσεια τάλαντα  
εἶη ἔχων, μηδὲ πρόσθε θεεῖν ἀνέμων·  
ἔλλ' ὑπὸ τῇ πέτρᾳ τᾷδ' ἥσομαι ἀγχαῖς ἔχων τυ  
στίννομα μᾶλ' ἐσορῶν τὰν Σικελᾶν ἐς ἄλλα ”

[“ Give me not to possess lands or gold, nor to run faster than the winds, but let me sit beneath this rock and hold thee in my arms, watching our flocks that feed together, towards the Sicilian sea ”]

The confession of this haunting comes a few lines later. When the talk of the friends is done, the poet ends the Eclogue with this final passage :

“ Thus they in verse alternate sang the year  
 For rabbit shy and listless ewe to hear  
 Among the gray rocks on the mountain green,  
 Beneath the sky in fair and pastoral scene,  
 Like those Sicilian swains, whose doric tongue  
 After two thousand years is ever young—  
*Sweet the pine’s murmur, and shepherd sweet thy pipe*  
 Or that which gentle Virgil, yet unripe,  
 Of Tityrus sang under the spreading beech  
 And gave to rustic clowns immortal speech,  
 By rocky fountain or on flowery mead,  
 Bidding their idle flocks at will to feed,  
 While they, retreated to some bosky glade,  
 Together told their loves, and as they played,  
 Sang what sweet thing so-e’er the poet feigned .  
 But these were men when good Victoria reigned,  
 Poets themselves, who without shepherd gear  
 Each of his native fancy sang the year ”

All that is worth keeping in Pope’s rules is kept—  
 but how unlike Pope !

“ ’Tis Nature methodiz’d, but Nature still ”

Without conventional scenery, or alien names, or  
 unreal shepherd gear, and better still, without any  
 but native fancy. But with some of the old beauty,  
 because it has the old inexhaustible form, the long-  
 descended gift of the Greek imagination.

## 12. THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

THE subject which I am to consider here is not one of those about which either argument or prophecy would be in place. The best that can be done is only to suggest, and suggestion is often conveyed more easily when it is thrown out, as it were, unconsciously, or at any rate without any apparent exercise of the will. I propose then to set forth a simple train of thought as it actually ran through my own mind, without motive, and without preparation.

The beginning of my meditation was as follows: I chanced to have taken down from the shelf for some other purpose the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, and I was captivated afresh by the little landscape picture with which the story begins. The young man going to Thessaly on business, riding wearily through the night on his white pony, over valleys of wet turf and sticky fields, comes at last to the cheering moment of dawn. He jumps down from the saddle, and like a good rider rubs down his horse with a bunch of fern, takes off the bit, and leads him to a gentle slope where he can refresh himself in the way usual with horses, then while the hungry beast wrenches a walking breakfast from the grass, his master overtakes two of his fellow travellers who had got a little ahead—and immediately we enter

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upon the long chain of tales which make the book. No one who has ever read this story can have failed to be struck by its modernity; it is true that the prevailing atmosphere is romantic and picaresque, but the social habits and superstitions of the *personæ* often remind us strangely of those of the last ten years in England, seen perhaps through a rather Elizabethan imagination: the style and vocabulary seem nearer to the twentieth than to the second century. It is difficult, for example, not to believe that "*gentaculum ambulatorium*"—a walking breakfast—would have sounded stranger in the ears of the Augustans than it does in our own. The word "*gentaculum*" is not, I believe, found in classical Latin. Perhaps historians will say that breakfast was not a meal known to the Romans; they have said the same thing about the Middle Ages, and there they are undoubtedly wrong, as John of Gaunt's household bills will prove. The truth would appear to be that breakfast was not a meal known to Latin literature of the best period; but that is quite a different matter. If language was given to us to conceal our thoughts, literature has certainly been created by us to conceal our lives. Intimate and familiar details are so seldom and so slightly referred to, that to discover anything about the daily life of the Romans or Greeks, it is necessary to read the dull mosaics into which learned professors like Herr Becker have worked up the result of their researches. When I first discovered for myself that breakfast was recognized by name, at any rate in the Silver Age, I was as much surprised and pleased as when in the pages of Martial I first came upon the ancestor of the Italian ice-cream merchant, selling little glass tumblers of sherbet and

snow in the streets of Rome. And that was in my last year at school instead of in my first

Even more complete—more necessarily complete—is the concealment in literature of the everyday use of language. People do not talk like books ; they do not even try to. A boy may have read nearly all the orthodox Latin books before he comes across the word “*oppido*” I believe that Cicero never once used it in the whole range of his speeches, though it peeps out in a private letter where he says he is afraid he looked, or might look, “*oppido ridiculus*”—mighty absurd “*Oppido*” is, of course, a bit of slang, an intensive word, as it were magnifying whatever was spoken of to the proportions of a whole town. By the time of Apuleius it must have been old, for this derivation was entirely forgotten “*Lignum a me toto oppido et quidem oppido quæsitum*”—he had been looking for wood all over the town, and with any amount of energy—as it were, a town-full of energy. This expression, which was in fact a tautology, was intended by Apuleius, and no doubt accepted by his readers, as a good pun. Slang and puns then were common among the Romans, and though Livy, Virgil, Horace, and Tacitus have nearly succeeded in concealing the fact, it has been given away to us by Apuleius ; and this is just what one would expect from a writer who, though a Roman citizen of the Empire, was by birth a Numidian from near Tunis, contemptuous of the old Roman morality and the classical Roman style, not above writing “ingenious verses in honour of a patent dentifrice,” and seeking success by the equally modern trick of popularizing science and philosophy, jumbling up hypnotism, eugenics, religion, and studies of criminal character in

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a style cleverly compounded of slang, solecisms, archaisms, and preciosities. It is clear that a great change was passing over the mental life of the Empire, and that the language was not only following the change, as it must always do, but was already on the downward slope, at the foot of which it was at last broken to pieces

This fall is for us full of interest, I may even say of dramatic interest, for we know the result in the case of the Latin language, but of our own English we cannot tell whether it will go through, or escape from, the same process of death and re-birth. At the moment in which we now stand, we find it easy to imagine, and to sympathize with, the feeling of a Roman gentleman in the later centuries of the Empire, who saw that every day the grand classic phrases were less and less used, and were looked upon as dull, provincial, and old-fashioned: worse still, that their place was being taken by a language only fit for schoolboys, servants, and buffoons. He would be in despair, nevertheless, if he could to-day survey the landscape of history, he would have at any rate the consolation of observing three great literatures—the Italian, the Spanish, and the French, each as great as their Latin ancestor—which could never have been created without the ruinous breakdown of the old language. And this is not all, for English, too, though not a Latin language, is a fabric which has been greatly enriched from the ruins of Rome.

The process has been a rather interesting one, and to give any idea of it an immense number of examples would have to be offered. I will take two of the simplest and most obvious. The word "*castrum*" origi-



nally denoted a camp or strong place. The pedigree of this word shows that its meaning not only developed, but diverged, in the *Satyricon* of Petronius we find the four scoundrels in the story leaving the city and repairing "*ad castellum Lycurgi, equitis Romani*" This is not a "castle" in any sense of the word; it is the country house of a Roman gentleman, and the immediate course of the story proves this, for when the local policeman arrives to take the names and addresses of the visitors, they escape by the ground-floor windows. It is this meaning of "*castellum*" which passed into the French language. The "*chastel*" was no doubt at first generally fortified, but by the time of Froissart not always so. It became "*chastaus*," and finally "*château*," which in modern France does not connote portcullises, donjons, arrow-slits, or battlements. From France the word has even passed, but very recently, into our own language: in Mr. de la Mare's Poems we find a dream of a "Dark Château" standing among waterfalls and cypresses with ivy and wild roses climbing upon its walls. the word is used simply as an English word. All this is in strange contrast to our own word "castle," which has steadily maintained its feudal and military associations. We have in England castles here and there which are no longer castellated, but the visitor who sees them for the first time generally complains that "this is not a castle at all!"

An instance of a different kind may be taken from Ronsard. In a charming poem he writes:

"Le petit enfant Amour  
Cueillait des fleurs à l'entour  
D'une ruche, où les abeilles  
Font leur petites logettes."

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"*Avettes*" are "little bees," and they remind us that the Latin "*apis*" has had a divergent descent within the French language itself: it is as follows:

- (1) *Apis* — ape — *apicula* — *abelha* — *abeille*.
- (2) *Apis* — ape — *apette* — *avette*.

The result is that the language possesses two distinctly different words for "bee," though they are not different by origin. For the writing of verse, I need not say, this is a great convenience. If the poet wishes to do so he can rhyme "*abeille*" to "*corbeille*," but if there are no baskets in his poem he can, like Ronsard, make his bees "*avettes*," and rhyme them to "*logettes*." There is also another word here which deserves notice. The modern editions of Ronsard spell the word "*leurs*" with a final "s," but this is a modern error. Ronsard himself wrote more correctly "*leur*," because the word is all that remains of the Latin "*illorum*," which is a genitive and cannot properly take a plural suffix. Either way it is a handy and well-sounding little word, and I think it must be admitted that after the delicate tripping of a line like

" Font leur petites logettes "

there is a distinctly clumsy air about the Latin equivalent "*faciunt illorum parvas cellulas*." The French descendants of the Roman gentleman had not done badly with their inheritance. They had helped to make Pierre Ronsard the "Prince of Poets."

Latin then, we may say, was broken down to good purpose, what can we say of the same process in our own language? Any one who has tried to read such poems as those of Robert Manning, or of Chaucer him-

self, must have discovered that by the end of the fourteenth century English had already undergone a great series of changes. It was not in ruins, but in a condition to which perhaps the term "linguistic decadence" might be applied; by our German relatives it was actually so applied. Their propaganda before the war included a definite theory of English linguistic decadence; "it was assumed that the inflectional system was the crowning development in the history of language, and that a speech which had lost its inflections was in a state of decay. Thus August Schleicher, the famous German philologist of the 'sixties, was wont to set the English 'had' side by side with its portentous Gothic ancestor '*habaidêderma*,' and to sigh over the sad fate which had overtaken so splendid an original, ignoring the fact that the clumsy Gothic giant could not accomplish a tithe of the work which its useful and active little descendant to-day performs." On the other hand it has been said, and I think truly, that English is the most serviceable, labour-saving, and practical instrument of thought, and the most precise, which civilized nations have at their command. To compare it, for example, with Latin: the word "*cantaveram*" amalgamates three ideas; our phrase "I had sung" analyses them so that you can accentuate the personal element, the time element, or the action, as you will. Further, in our phrase the number, the case, etc., are only expressed once; in a sentence of Latin or German they are frequently repeated twice or three times by words in agreement with each other. But multiplicity and repetition in a language are marks of the savage or rustic, e.g. in the language of the Australian blacks there are many different forms of the verb to express actions

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by two, three, four, fifteen, or twenty persons acting together. Even the Greeks had a dual, and their language was by so much more primitive than ours. In the lower grades of our society this kind of repetition and particularity is still favoured, no doubt as a precaution against a probable slowness of intelligence in the listener: "I says to 'er, I says, says I," is not a form considered necessary amongst the educated. In other words, English has passed out of the stage of unnecessary terminations and vain repetitions which are still almost as common in German as in Latin: it has, in fact, been perfected as an instrument of intelligent speech.

But this comforting conclusion is itself of a kind to increase our anxiety for the future. We have a language fine not only in its precision, but also in its sound; a sound not dependent upon sonorous terminations which have too much similarity and no real significance, but deriving its power from the close union of its form and content. The sound of the greatest English poetry is fine because it is "the sound of the meaning."

" On such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage,"

or—

" When music sounds, that which I was I am,  
Ere to this haunt of brooding dust I came "

In lines like these the beauty is not a sonorous emptiness; it comes from a union of sense with a magical use of ordinary words. So powerful is the combination

that we seem to have lost almost nothing by the disuse of part of our old picturesque vocabulary, and of some of those curious words scientifically described as homonyms. We no longer speak of monks as "abbey-lubbers," nor of wasps as "apple-drones"; "vane" (weathervane), being too like "vein" in sound, has been ousted by the weathercock, "vale" has become "valley" to distinguish it from "veil," and for the same reason "vails" have been superseded by "tips" Seamen have long disputed whether a ship is "under weigh" or "under way"; and it is curious that "road," which only occurs once in the Authorized Version of the Bible, is now almost always used in place of "way," which was universal down to the seventeenth century.

It is perhaps time to take some note of the changes which are now coming on our language at home and abroad in the world. First of all, it is quite natural that in our Empire, as in that of the Romans, the metropolitan vocabulary should suffer a great deal of forcible expansion at the hands of adopted citizens of mixed education. We have long known that a Chinese coolie offering to take your luggage upstairs will probably use the form "Me carry piecey-bag top-side," and this is perhaps not much worse than the French which we ourselves speak on our travels. But in the great business community of the world, in which we are only partners, there is some serious possibility of a new dialect arising. In the following letter a Japanese man of business is writing on complete terms of equality to his English partner:

"Regarding to the matter of escape the penalty for non delivery of this machine, there is only a way to creep round

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same by diplomat, and we must make statement of strike occur our factory (of course big untrue) and please address my person on enclosed form of letter, and believe this will avoid the trouble of penalty of same As Mr. Henry Farmer is most religious and competent man, also heavily upright and godly, it fears me that useless apply for his signature Please therefore attach same by Yokohama office making forge, but no cause for fear of prison-happenings as this is often operated by other merchants of highest integrity

"It is highest unfortunate Arthur Hulburd so god-like man, and excessive awkward for business purpose. I think more better add little serpent-like wisdom to upright manhood, and thus found good business edifice "

Another attractive specimen of Imperial good-fellowship is the following, addressed to a stranger in this country :

" Jamulpur, E I R

" DEAR FRIEND,—Kindly send me a copy of scientific Review Bedrock which is published by your editorship.

" I hope that you will accept this my request. My best compliments to you and to your lover and my sweet love to your children Sharp reply is solicited.

" Yours affectionately,

" M. A RAZA, M F C

" Mechanical Workshop E I R

" Jamulpur."

The following have also been recently received from India :

(1) " I wish to report the vile manner in which Driver — carried out shunting duties at the station This Driver is not in favour of the pointsman's flag nor will he view the shunter's signals but remains murmuring within himself. He then furiously charge the waggons with gravity of his ill-will to do so until contents palm pots were reduced

to entire emptiness. I trust T M will kindle some warm instructions in the bosom of this Driver "

(2) " I beg you be allowed to put myself under your supreme art and control I got no sence to control myself

" Your Affectionate poor Fellow

" JOHN GBADAMOSI "

" P.S. I am even better than this testimonial if you employ me your work will be more and more amen "

The following is from our great Dominion in the West :

" MISTER DEAR FREN,—I got the motor pump I buy from you alrite, but why for Gods sake you doan send me no starter, whats use of motor when she doan have no starter, I lose to me my customuer—sure thing you doan trete me right—is my money not so good as the other fellah—I wate ten days and my customer he holler like hell for water for the motor pump—you know he is hot summer now, and the wind he know blow the mill. The motor pump he got no starter so what the hell he goan to go, you doan send me the starter quick I send he back and order some motor pump from another man

" Goodbye.

" Your Fren,

" H. GASTONG."

" P S —Since I rite these I find the goddam starter in the box. Excuse to me."

This genuine sentence may be taken as representing the Negro influence on the language of the United States :

" No, suh, he ain't come back sence I sawn him went out."

So much for outside influences, but even if these prove to be partly or wholly eccentric and ephemeral, we cannot forget that our business men have for some

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time been developing a dialect at home. It would be perhaps libellous to give genuine examples of business correspondence here. I can only say from my own experience that the following exchange of letters would not unfairly represent a correspondence quite possible at the present day between the honorary secretary of a literary society in any part of England and an English man of letters, proposing and accepting an engagement to speak or lecture.

(1) "DEAR SIR,—*Re* our conversation of the 9th ult., when you thought you could see your way to address our Society, I beg to inform you that we are at the time of writing in a position to solicit fulfilment of your kind promise and would ask you to quote us a choice of dates for same."

(2) "Your esteemed favour to hand crossing mine of even date I now beg to confirm same and hereby accept your valued invitation for an early fixture as per list appended: 13th, 14th, or 15th inst, 2nd or 3rd prox "

No concealment is necessary in the case of the following letter in departmental English which recently appeared in *The Times*

"... The writer ventures to think it is worthy of preservation as a record of the style of correspondence used by Government officials in time of war. It is as follows "

" 'The attached Army Form B 178 is returned to you for favour of disposal in accordance with the instructions contained in Appendix 77 of A C I 455 of 1917 (d) and (f), as amended by A C I 23 of 1918, namely, to the Officer Commanding as named in the schedule to General Instructions 2, issued with A.C.I. 13 of 1917, amended by A.C.I. 40 of 1918, *re* the Officer Commanding the Depot ' "

" So far as I can make out the translation into commercial English is as follows 'Attached form should have been sent to the Officer Commanding the Depot ' "



Perhaps no comment on these letters is necessary. It is sufficient to know that they are typical specimens, and all but two chosen from a large number of genuine examples ; moreover they cannot be dismissed as ludicrous mistakes of foreigners. They are all the work of citizens of the British Empire or of the United States, for whom English may be said to be, though in varying degrees, their own language, they are at present casual and individual forms, but they are all contributing to the formation of a new idiom, and they are doing this under very slight control. Schoolmasters do what they can, but their methods are often unpopular ; those who speak our language are for the most part freedom-loving, careless, illogical, and easily captivated by novelty. They think very little about their speech-inheritance, and when they do think they are apt to conclude that it can look after itself as it did in the time of their fathers. This attitude is a striking contrast to that of some other nations. The French have long been remarkable, not only for the scientific care with which they direct and correct the development of their language, but also for the strong feeling of imaginative loyalty with which they regard it. Witnesses who appeared before a recent Committee on the Teaching of English gave very striking evidence upon this point. The humblest of French peasants may be heard to rebuke his children for an expression which in his opinion is " not good French " In one district of France a peasant will speak in patois to his animals, but not to his horse, because, as he says, the horse knows what is French and what is not. The Anglo-Saxon carter and shepherd speak an admirably terse and effective language to their teams and colliers, but it

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cannot by any stretch be called English. Miners of Lancashire or Staffordshire also speak a fine-sounding language, and are devoted to it, but it is not the English of the rest of England, and that very fact is partly the cause of their pride. We may hope that our true and characteristic dialects will be long in disappearing, but also that standard English may be added to them; bi-lingualism is in every way more desirable than Babel.

Our chief concern, however, must be with Standard English itself. It is no mere patriotic boast to say that it is the most important language in the world; it is on the way to becoming the universal language, and International Conferences have actually declared that it ought to take that place. On the other hand, there is a group in the United States who talk of frankly abandoning the name and the use of English and substituting the "American language," which they declare to be already in existence among them. We do not share this hope or expectation, because we greatly value community of language as a link of understanding between the two peoples, and as the possible basis of a feeling of fellowship. The matter is one which concerns us in England very nearly, because the language used by Americans both in speech and in literature has always been attractive to our people, and because it is now coming over here more frequently and more actively than it has ever done. Language owes a large proportion of its changes to the taste and freedom of youth, especially at schools and universities. It is an important fact that out of about 4,000 undergraduates at Oxford to-day, there are 1,000 who come from America or from the outlying parts of the British Empire. I have heard it said recently that it is often

difficult for older people to understand what is being said in conversation by a group of Oxford undergraduates

I can believe this, but I must add that it does not much alarm me; fashions in language are very catching, but they have a way of passing very quickly—they seem to thrust each other out. The peculiar dialects and vocabularies of Max Adeler, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain ran through the schools of England like a prairie fire. The fire has so completely burnt itself out that most of those under the age of twenty-five years whom I have lately questioned declare that they have never read a word of any of the three. They have even forgotten, or almost forgotten, the dialect of O. Henry, which was equally popular only a few years ago, but is now as dead as Uncle Remus or Helen's Babies. A word or a phrase here and there no doubt survives because it deserves to survive, and this, after all, is very much what has been happening for centuries, in the main to our great advantage.

I believe then that we can stand a great deal of new slang, absorb the desirable part of it, and work off the rest. The danger would seem to lie in a different direction—in a possible degradation of the structure of language. The structure of language, or in other words, the form of expression in speech, is so intimately connected with the structure of the mind or the form of thought itself, that it is impossible to change the one in any serious degree without changing the other. The world seems to have entered upon an age in which the most necessary quality for language is not so much greater flexibility as greater precision. The steady permeation of our life by scientific method has had some evil effects, but has undoubtedly

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strengthened us on the intellectual side, and given at any rate greater possibilities to the arts. It would be paradoxical and lamentable too if at the same moment a general lapse into slipshod ways of writing and speaking should occur and should react, as it inevitably must, upon national ways of thought.

The remedy is not easy to find, and if found will be still more difficult to apply. The Poet Laureate has been happily inspired in the foundation of his Society for Pure English, which devotes itself to scientific and historical study of the uses of English in the past and present, and without claiming to legislate or to deliver academic judgments, places the facts before the English-speaking world in such a way that the legitimate inferences can be easily drawn. Americans have been fortunately possessed by the same idea, and a combination of their best scholarship with our own for the practical purpose of recording and furthering the development of our common language is at this moment in progress. The proposed Society will have neither the will nor the power to compel change or to arrest it, but it can hardly be doubted that it might have a beneficent and far-reaching effect, not only upon the future of the English language, but, as a natural corollary, upon the thought and influence of the English-speaking races.

### 13. ENGLISH LITERATURE IN EDUCATION

WE may say of Literature, as Goldsmith said of poetry, that it was from the first "consecrated to pleasure." The consecration is a double one. There is one pleasure of the writer, who in speaking out to his fellow-men delivers his own spirit. There are other pleasures of the reader—he is enjoying the new world created for him out of sound and thought, or he is responding to the intimacy of a nature greater and richer than his own, or he is joining himself to the fellowship of an old and splendid society, whose origins and development are traceable through a series of national records. His preference may be for any one of these three aspects of Literature—the æsthetic, the biographical, or the historic; or he may find in them all a mixed delight which will vary according to his own temperament. But, whatever be the mode of his pleasure, it will all be a widening and deepening of experience, all a part of the lifelong process of his education.

The time has been—it is, perhaps, not wholly past—when the words "pleasure" and "education" seemed to jar with one another. But modern thought is recovering for us an old and almost forgotten wisdom. We are learning to see education as the growth of the human powers, inevitable in every life, but favourable or un-

favourable in proportion to the opportunities afforded for the gaining of experience—that is, for acquiring proficiency in the art of living. We see, too, or we shall soon be seeing, that the pleasures of art and science, whatever may be thought of other pleasures, are not in themselves of a kind to retard this experience, this proficiency. In reality the question does not arise at all, except by a false analogy from the grosser appetites : in the life of the spirit the distinction between pleasure and pain, or ease and effort, is meaningless. Our deepest learning is unconscious, our profoundest happiness often so full of pain as to be indistinguishable from it. What is the feeling with which we see *King Lear* acted, or read the end of the *Knighi's Tale* ? Is it not true that though all thought, all passion, all delight are the ministers of Love, yet “ the paths of Love are rougher than thoroughfares of stones ” ? The important point is that after such experiences no human life can remain unchanged, and the lives are few that are beyond the reach of this kind of education.

But by what method is it to be administered ? Literature is multifarious—so is the human mind : how can they be brought into contact with the best chance of pleasure for the greatest number ? This is the problem which confronts the maker of a systematic study of any national literature, and it is a real problem, interesting, complicated, even controversial. To begin with, we must decide the question of age . is our book to be offered to children, to students, to advanced students, or to the general reader ?

Not to children Literature is their affair, but the history of Literature is not. They are too near to the worlds of the imagination, and too far, as yet, from the

world of Time, their need is for poetry, songs, drama, each for itself, and by itself. And what we can teach them is not anything about books, but the first lesson of all, the use and delight of books. This is sometimes difficult, more often not, children naturally love beauty of words, beauty of form and colour, expressed emotion—and they love them most when given to them in concrete images or in scenes of action. Often they are nearer to poetry than they will ever be in after life; but it will take time for them to realize it as the work of individual men or the record of a community. The touch of human life will come first to them from the personality of the teacher, whose enthusiasm will arouse a similar emotion in them, as the vibration of one glass will set others ringing with the same musical note. At this stage linguistic, metric, or historical science is an impossibility; who would burden a child reading *The Water Babies* with notes on the derivation of Kingsley's style from that of Rabelais and his predecessors?

But the period of childhood does not last. Some day, at what age it is impossible to tell, we must leave it and enter upon the second stage of our journey, in which we shall have for guide the intellectual as well as the æsthetic sense. About the relative importance of the two and the amount of confidence which should be placed in them there will always be heart-searchings. We may believe with Meredith that humanity, "an army marching out of wilderness," owes its only hope of safety through the ages to the guiding of Reason; yet all artists and many others, even among the most reasonable, would prefer almost any human catastrophe to the perishing of the sense of beauty. Unconsciously perhaps, but unmistakably, there has for centuries been a

conflict in English feeling on this point almost comparable to a sectarian difference in religious opinion. Yet it is vain to regard with fear or prejudice the æsthetic sense, for it is in children the strongest and most natural part of their life, and their education must be largely based upon it. It is equally certain when we are dealing with Literature as a means of education that the growth of the intellect will bring with it a change, of which we must take account. Just as no one can for long devote himself even to a game without beginning to take an interest in the technique and even the history of it, so for any child who is really a reader the time will come when the technique and the history of Literature will redouble the interest of the book itself.

It is fortunate that this is so, for no education, no personal growth, could satisfactorily correspond with life unless such an art as that of Literature were seen in its development and in its relation to the community. There is no reason why this desire to understand what is really the science of literature should interfere with the æsthetic appreciation of it. And it is the experience of all scholars that the two are in fact interwoven in a very close and significant manner. Instead, therefore, of taking sides in a conflict between two parties, one of which distrusts the senses and the other disparages the reason, what we have to do is to keep both spiritual activities in view and point out clearly how the advantages of both are to be secured at the same time. Teachers can do something, if they are not themselves disabled by a party bias ; but many of those who are passing through this second stage of the literary pilgrimage have left their school days behind and must look out for themselves. It will be worse than useless to offer either to



young or old a guide to the beauties of Literature or a handbook to literary appreciation. What can be done is to provide, on whatever scale, a conspectus or map of the long course of Literature as it flows through the English landscape, prepared by writers whose pleasure in books is of the two-sided kind, and who have the necessary restraint to praise in few words, and the necessary scholarship to give information accurately and in the right proportion. The rest must be done by the reader; nothing can help or save those who have an unhealthy appetite for facts about authors and no natural hunger for the books themselves.

But once given the true intellectual *wanderlust*, a map like this may lead us far. When we have secured, for ourselves or others, a childhood of "dear Imagination's only truth," and when we have spent the first ardour of study on the literary craft and tradition of our own people, we have come only to our true starting-place, the port of embarkation for a voyage over seas that are no longer our own territorial waters. They may call us now "advanced students," and our expedition a "university course" or "honour school"; we shall do better for ourselves if we think in terms of "humane letters" and a "philosophy of life." We have, in fact, come to the final and endless stage of our education, in which an "examination" could only be an early incident, and any answers we can give are only valuable in proportion as they answer questions of our own.

In this voyage we are explorers. We may travel over known regions, but even in those there are discoveries to be made. The map we now draw will not be one that can be bought even from the best professionals, because

it is the record of our own observations, and traced upon the chart of which we alone have the secret and the use. It will not be a map of our own island merely, but a survey of the inhabited world ; not a history of English Literature only, but a study in the Making of the Western Mind. For though we in modern Europe have not the honour due to founders and benefactors, we have the wide lands of the past for our inheritance, and our literatures are to-day main streams into which more ancient rivers of thought have flowed down as tributaries. For the perfect understanding even of our own people and their national life and expression, we need to go upstream beyond the inflow of the Voltarean criticism, the German philosophy, the turbid current of the French Revolution, the Romantic revival in poetry and the tide of Industrialism, to the upper waters of the Renaissance. We must have in view the Reformation in England and Germany, the wave of intellectual revolt in France, the dominance and decline of Spain, the trade of the Dutch and the Elizabethans, the rise of Science and the New Learning. Behind these again lies the country of Italian art, of the French troubadours, and of our own Chaucer, through whom we reach the world of Dante, of Boccaccio, and of the *Romance of the Rose*, and so back into the Middle Ages, the Feudal Empire, and the Œcumenical Church. Then across the Dark Ages of militarism, monasticism, and Mohammedanism, the decadence of Rome and the chaos of the barbarians, we shall see clearly the ancient streams of Hellenism and Hebraism passing down into twilight before the dawn of Christianity, and, even beyond these, we shall have some sense of the profound thought and poetry of India and the Far East

It is a wonderful journey, but there are dangers by the way. Just as it is fatal in the earlier stages to make Literature a "knowledge subject," and bury the revelation of beauty under a cairn of facts, so in this later and longer part of the journey it would be fatal to fall into the error of treating Literature as a branch of history or of sociology. No study of it can be too wide or too exact, but its first and last appeal must always be æsthetic and emotional. Whatever its immediate object may be, Literature has always something of a philosophical aspect, and is great in proportion to this: "*Tout génie a deux faces ; l'une tournée vers le temps, l'autre vers l'éternité*" It is true that great writers are for the most part apparently bent on telling us of the things of Time ; but what they are really suggesting by that very quality which makes their writing Literature, is Truth, which is of all countries and all times, and Beauty, which is less than half a native of any country or of any time. Even children feel this ; they become listless or impatient when informed that a compliment to Queen Elizabeth is intruded into the most beautiful scene of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So the notes to many school editions are nothing but tiresome calls to us to come back from the asphodel fields where we are listening to our contemporaries, Homer, Dante, Milton, Æschylus, Shakespeare, Meredith, Hardy, and the rest ; and those who make use of a History of Literature should never cease to remember that its intention is not to involve them in the turmoil of transitory life, but to bring them to that place apart.

## 14. NOTES ON CERTAIN POETS

### I. KEATS

THERE is this difference among poets—that the work of one seems to raise questions which can only be answered by a biography, while that of another seems almost to be a collection of beautiful objects existing apart from their maker, and best appreciated when taken singly and separately. There is even a school of critics who speak much of objectivity and impersonality, and value the work of art just in proportion as it enables the artist himself to be forgotten. For them the poet is successful only when he produces a flawless piece of work fit to take its place in the showcase where similar pieces have for long been exhibited.

Keats, at any rate, is not a poet of this kind. Everything he wrote is clearly the work of a human spirit expressing itself in the presence of others; it is a piece of life, and constantly invites us to consider questions which belong to life, and even to the life of a particular man in a particular community. Moreover, the beauties of his poetry and its demerits as well, when their origin is explained by the facts of the poet's life, form the starting points for many reflections of the greatest interest, on character, on social history, and on philosophy. To keep the biography and the poetry of John Keats apart would be, not only to hide each from the illumination cast by the other, but to deprive the reader

of one of the chief gifts of poetry—the power of seeing human life in a wider and more intense circle of light.

Let us put down first the bare facts—the years and books in order. Keats was born in October 1795, the son of a West Countryman who had married the daughter of his employer, a livery-stable keeper. This maternal grandfather died in 1805, and his daughter, the poet's mother, in 1810; leaving some £13,000 in trust for John, his sister, and two brothers. John, who had been at school from 1805 to 1810, was then apprenticed by his guardian to a surgeon, and in 1816 became a dresser at Guy's Hospital. In the same year he made the acquaintance of Leigh Hunt, and began to write the poems we know. His first volume appeared in March 1817. From September to November, at Oxford, Hampstead, and Burford Bridge, he was writing *Endymion*. In 1818 he began *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*, published *Endymion*, and went for a walking tour to the English Lakes and the West of Scotland. A serious illness followed, and in August and September appeared two notorious reviews of *Endymion* which were mistakenly supposed to have had a fatal effect upon his health.

His friends during this period were Leigh Hunt, Charles Armitage Brown, John Hamilton Reynolds, Charles Wells, and Charles Wentworth Dilke, with the painters Haydon, Hilton, De Wint, and Severn.

In October 1818 he began *Hyperion*, and about the same time became attached to Miss Fanny Brawne, whom he met at Dilke's house in Wentworth Place. In January 1819 he stayed with the Dilkes in Sussex, where he wrote *The Eve of St. Agnes* and began *The Eve of St. Mark*. In August he went with Brown to

Winchester, and there wrote *Lamia* and *Otho*. The rest of the year was spent upon *The Cap and Bells* and the revision of *Hyperion*

In February 1820 his illness declared itself as consumption, and in June he was completely disabled by a second attack of hemorrhage. On 18th September Severn sailed with him for Italy, and nursed him devotedly until his death at Rome on February 23, 1821.

It was, therefore, in less than five years of early life that Keats produced a body of poetry which is hardly surpassed in fame and influence by the work of any English poet. No wonder. for everything about it is significant. His earliest considerable poem, *Sleep and Poetry*, shows how consciously he aimed at keeping the balance between the sensuous and the humane sides of his own genius. The passage.

“ O for ten years, that I may overwhelm  
Myself in poesy ; so I may do the deed  
That my own soul has to itself decreed  
Then will I pass the countries that I see  
In long perspective, and continually  
Taste their pure fountains First the realm I'll pass  
Of Flora, and old Pan : sleep in the grass,  
Feed upon apples red, and strawberries,  
And choose each pleasure that my fancy sees ,  
Catch the white-handed nymphs in shady places,  
To woo sweet kisses from averted faces . . . ”

is immediately followed by lines of a far different outlook :

“ And can I ever bid these joys farewell ?  
Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,  
Where I may find the agonies, the strife  
Of human hearts ; . . . ”

ending with a wonderful vision of Imagination as an aerial charioteer flying over the world and writing the revelation of it.

These ambitions were not understood by the poet's contemporaries; not merely because the critics of the day were dominated by the doctrine of "taste," but in part because in *Endymion*, the first considerable poem offered to the public, there were defects enough to obscure the author's intention and diminish the effect of his powers. The world has long accepted this poem as a thing of beauty and a joy for ever, but, even among Keats's admirers, many still see in it insipidities and faults of taste, while few, until Mr. Bridges traced them out, could follow the intricacies of the plot and the allegory. Keats himself, in his famous introduction to *Endymion*, recognized and explained the weaknesses of his own poem, but in sentences too significant to be understood by the critics of the day. They failed also to perceive his originality, which lay, not in his disregard of the past—for he was of the direct tradition, plainly descended from Chaucer, Spenser, and Milton—but in his great power of assimilation, and in the ease with which he succeeded in conveying by pictures, images, and legends profound reflections, which would not have been so tranquilly visible in the waters of any modern narrative. In fact, when he showed the colours of life most brilliantly, he was supposed to be dreaming most remotely.

In spite of these misunderstandings his fame was quickly established and has continually increased. "If one English poet," says Mr. Bridges, "might be recalled to-day from the dead to continue the work which he left unfinished on earth, it is probable that the

crown of his country's desire would be set on the head of John Keats." Various reasons have been given in support of this opinion, but they are not very subtle or exhaustive. "An old nation with a great literature may well come in such a case to a true judgment without being very conscious of the motives underlying it. It is at least possible that the peculiar sympathy with which we read the poetry of Keats is due to the fact that he exemplifies and illuminates, not only human life, but the English national culture in so many aspects. Consider, for example, his origin, his education, his adoption of poetry in place of a profession, his advancement in social life, his love affairs, his political sympathies, and the individuality, as well as the limitations, of his religious philosophy. In respect of these, if he was not a typical Englishman, he was at any rate a type which English life might be expected to produce. He was born of the middle class—so exactly the middle that it is impossible to define the position of his family. They were neither "humble" nor "of good birth"; neither "wealthy" nor "indigent"; neither "cultivated" nor "commercial-minded", they belonged to the underwood, where the sap is always rising, and the growth of a great tree is possible anywhere, at any time. The first condition for such a chance is life in a free country—that is, a country where the growth of exceptional powers is not fatally restricted by lack of birth, wealth, position, or even of orthodox education. But something more than that is needed, something not always found even in a free country. Keats inherited a livelihood, but no tradition. His family possessed no memories of culture or of cultured friends. Yet his country had a culture



and a tradition, and to them he owed his chance. He was to have schooling : he got education. The school to which he went was, no doubt, a small and obscure one, but he found there just that which is education—the contact with a live mind capable of introducing him to the great minds of the past. No one could have guessed that the stableman's son belonged by birth half to Ancient Greece, and half to the Age of Chivalry, but this was instantly discovered in the course of his out-of-school friendship with Charles Cowden Clarke, a boy only eight years older than himself :

“ Nor should I now, but that I've known you long ;  
 That you first taught me all the sweets of song  
 The grand, the sweet, the terse, the free, the fine ;  
 What swell'd with pathos, and what right divine :  
 Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,  
 And float along like buds o'er summer seas ;  
 Miltonian storms, and more, Miltonian tenderness ,  
 Michael in arms, and more, meek Eve's fair slenderness.  
 Who read for me the sonnet swelling loudly  
 Up to its climax and then dying proudly ?  
 Who found for me the grandeur of the ode,  
 Growing, like Atlas, stronger from its load ?  
 Who let me taste that more than cordial diam,  
 The sharp, the rapier-pointed epigram ?  
 Shew'd me that epic was of all the king,  
 Round, vast, and spanning all like Saturn's ring ?  
 You too upheld the veil from Clio's beauty,  
 And pointed out the patriot's stern duty ;  
 The might of Alfred, and the shaft of Tell ;  
 The hand of Brutus, that so grandly fell  
 Upon a tyrant's head    Ah ! had I never seen,  
 Or known your kindness, what might I have been ? ”

Keats, then, got his Greek and English literature as Shakespeare did, not from the school curriculum, but

from social intercourse and at second hand, perhaps even at third hand, for it seems that what he got from his friend, that friend received in "forest walks" from "the wronged Libertas"—Leigh Hunt. And this is one way of English education: *itur in antiquam silvam*. It is only possible where the forest is old.

One or two similar tracks of thought may be pointed out. No genius could be more naturally romantic than the English; yet all through the centuries the classics, and especially the Greek, have had a peculiar fascination for our poets. Keats loved the clear outlines of the epigram and the Grecian Urn, though his vision was more often filled with the enchanted colours of the Middle Ages. He was a striking example of what Sir Michael Sadler has called "the two-mindedness of England." In one respect he was still more typically two-minded. He was born of the class from which Puritanism derived its origin and strength, and he viewed life as a training of the soul. But he thought as liberally of beauty and of pleasure as Milton himself in his young *Comus* days; and he gave a deeper and richer meaning to the moral life. It is with him a struggle, not merely for good conduct and salvation, but for personality itself.

"There may be intelligences or sparks of the divinity in millions; but they are not souls till they have acquired identities, till each one is personally itself. How, then, are these sparks, which are God, to have identity given them, so as to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How but by the medium of a world like this?"

From the work of a boy who died at twenty-five such paths branch out in many directions. The more often

we pursue them the more certain we are to come back with the sense of what a great tradition may mean in the hands of a great poet.

## II SHELLEY

SHELLEY'S star was obscured during his lifetime ; but through the hundred years since his death it has shone more and more clearly as of the first magnitude. It will be brighter yet—it still does not rain influence as it should : and the reason for this is plain. A poet, with us, is very commonly classed among craftsmen . he is a singer, a gem-cutter, or a tapestry-weaver ; we concern ourselves, not with the man, but with his work, and with his work only as it fulfils our purpose and not as it expresses his intuition. Sometimes we realize that a poet has had an interesting history, and that dates or derivations for an account of his poetry may be supplied from it ; but it is seldom admitted or believed that the life and the poetry may be one and the same. There are cases, we know, in which the two are not co-extensive ; and in others, where the poetry appears admirable but the life reprobate, it is generally thought kinder to praise the good and turn away from the evil.

In this respect Milton and Shelley have suffered a like fate. Both, in consideration of their poetry, are forgiven their revolutionary theories and passionate lives ; and in the oblivion of that forgiveness there is lost a great part of the motive force and the profounder significance of their work. But there is this difference, that what we pass over in Milton's case is

entirely lamentable—the domestic unkindness and political savagery by which he lost the Paradise of his first happy nature, whereas in Shelley nearly all that is regrettable is also memorable, because however puerile, immoral, or ridiculous it may be, it is part of the real man, and springs from, or is related to, that very ardour for moral and intellectual beauty which was his gift to the world. His life was a strange pattern of tragedy and comedy, a dome of many-coloured glass which stained the white radiance of eternity, but whatever we think of the colours we must accept them for the sake of the light within the lantern

For those who look at Shelley's career from the outside only, as his contemporaries did and as his detractors would still have us do, it is not difficult to present him as absurd, uncontrolled, even as dangerous to society. The heir to wealth and rank, he was a rebel against all authority and orthodoxy, especially against the authority and orthodoxy of his own father. At Eton he revolted against the fagging system, at Oxford he published in his first year a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism*, and for that was not only expelled from the University but forbidden to return home. This was in February 1811, when he was not yet nineteen, and before the autumn he had married Harriet Westbrook, his sister's schoolfellow, a girl who, like himself, had complained of paternal tyranny. In February 1812, the young couple were warned to quit Dublin, where they had printed an *Address to the Irish People*: they settled first in Wales and afterwards at Lynmouth in North Devon. Here Shelley received into his house a second distressed lady, Eliza-

beth Hitchener, in whom he found at first a "Portia," but afterwards a "Brown Demon."

In 1813 the Shelleys returned to London, and their first child Ianthe was born; *Queen Mab* was printed, but for private circulation only. In this year Shelley formed a friendship with William Godwin, author of *Political Justice*, and in the summer of 1814, while Harriet was away, he stayed in Godwin's house, fell suddenly in love with his daughter Mary, and in July eloped to France with her, accompanied by her step-sister Claire. This act caused great distress to Godwin, though (as Shelley pointed out) it was in accord with the principles which he had himself advocated. Harriet never saw Shelley again, though he invited her to join him and Mary in Switzerland.

In 1815 Shelley's father succeeded Sir Bysshe in the baronetcy, and arranged that his son should receive an income of £1,000 a year. In 1816 Shelley and Byron met and made friends at Geneva; Shelley and Mary then returned to England and settled at Marlow. *Alastor* was published in this year; and towards the end of it Harriet's suicide set Shelley free to marry Mary Godwin.

In 1817 he produced *Laon and Cythna*, afterwards called *The Revolt of Islam*. In the winter he fell into ill health, and in the following spring went with his wife and Claire to Italy. At Naples the friendship with Byron was carried further, but did little or nothing to alleviate Shelley's depression, and his physical suffering, by his own account, was "constant and poignant." In June 1819, his son William died in Rome; in November at Florence another son was born, who afterwards succeeded as Sir Percy Florence Shelley.

During these two years the *Quarterly Review* published a series of violent attacks on Shelley, as a dangerous monster of atheism and revolution. He had achieved public notice at last and was cheerfully humorous over it. "But for them," he said laughing, "I should be utterly unknown."

In January 1820, the Shelleys moved to Pisa, followed by Byron. *Prometheus Unbound*, written in the previous autumn, was published this year. In 1821 yet another distressed damsel attracted Shelley—Emilia Viviani, a novice detained against her will—and he wrote *Epipsychidion* in honour of Platonic love. On February 23, 1821, Keats, to whom Shelley had generously but vainly offered hospitality, died at Rome, and was commemorated in the elegy entitled *Adonais*. This was followed by *Hellas*, a lyrical drama inspired by the struggle of the Greeks for liberty.

In April 1822, the Shelleys, with their friends, Mr and Mrs Williams, moved to the Villa Magni on the Gulf of Spezzia, where Shelley bathed, boated, talked to Mrs Williams, and composed *The Triumph of Life*. On 8th July he set sail from Leghorn with Williams in a new yacht, the *Don Juan*, intending to return to the Villa Magni. A sudden squall or fog came on and the boat was lost—run down probably by a felucca. Shelley's body was washed ashore near Via Reggio, and burnt by Trelawney, Byron, and Leigh Hunt.

The full story, of which this is but a bare outline, would be found, if adequately written, to contain as much pathos, passion, intellectual splendour, and philosophical suggestion as any known to us. But it can only be imagined on a vast scale. Shelley was great in himself and in all his sources and activities; the true

narrative of his life would contain everything that could illustrate him, including all his poems, letters, and essays in their order among other acts and events. The resulting pattern would be an intricate one, but it would be seen to be a pattern and not a tangle.

For the sake of simplification we may pick out three threads. Shelley began and ended with an instinctive conviction that authority was an unwarrantable hindrance, and convention of any kind a degeneration. Commerce, Law, Government, Religion, devised for the ordering of human life, were used solely by tyrants for selfish and oppressive ends. His doctrine, preached in *Queen Mab*, that all four should be abolished, was naturally held to be merely destructive. Shelley himself, whose creed had nothing negative in it, suppressed the mere denunciations in this piece, and in *Prometheus Unbound* discovered a better way to expound his passionate belief in the spirit of Man. The power of the Oppressor is vaguely typified by Jupiter, whose fall takes place without any charges being implied against the institutions of this or that time or country. Prometheus, or Man, delivered from bondage, unites with Asia, the spirit of love which animates the Universe, and Earth becomes "the calm empire of a happy soul."

As the belief is lofty and the sincerity profound, so the manner of presentation is in this poem masterly. Shelley has ceased to preach: he now sings, as the god sang "when Ilion like a mist rose into towers." And he knew what he was doing, for in his Preface to *Prometheus* he expresses his abhorrence of didactic poetry and his purpose "simply to familiarize the highly refined imagination . . . with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love and

admire and trust and hope and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness." How universal is the truth of this, and how far Shelley had then travelled since the days when he denounced Christianity in *Queen Mab*, may be seen from the concluding lines, in which he sought to raise the heart of a generation still broken by the memories of a great war.

" To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite ,  
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night ;  
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent ,  
To love, and bear , to hope till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates ;  
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent ,  
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free ,  
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory."

The second thread may be described as " the Pursuit of the Well-Beloved." This, as Mr Hardy has shown, is a typical and not exceptional motive in human nature, but few men observe and record it of themselves. Shelley considered it " one of the most interesting situations of the human mind," and described it in *Alastor*, a poem which " represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic to the contemplation of the universe . . . the magnificence and beauty of the external world. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous and tranquil and self-possessed. But the



period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened, and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover, could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image." In this poem the youth seeks in vain for a prototype of his conception ; in real life, whether Shelley's or another's, he finds not only one prototype but others in succession.

In 1813 a sincere little poem to Harriet represents her as the poet's purer mind and the inspiration of his song ; "the love that, gleaming through the world, Wards off the poisonous arrow of its scorn " Eight years afterwards, in *Epipsychidion*, we find Shelley for the fourth time in much the same poetical relation, this time to Emilia, a " Vestal sister," whom he proposes to make the lady of his solitude because she was the embodiment of his ideal imagination :

" There was a Being whom my spirit oft  
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,  
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,  
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,  
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves  
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves  
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor  
Paved her light steps,—on an imagined shore,  
Under the gray beak of some promontory  
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,

That I beheld her not. In solitudes  
 Her voice came to me through the whispering woods . . .  
 And from the breezes whether low or loud,  
 And from the rain of every passing cloud,  
 And from the singing of the summer birds,  
 And from all sounds, all silence. In the words  
 Of antique verse and high romance,—in form,  
 Sound, colour,—in whatever checks that Storm  
 Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;  
 And in that best philosophy, whose taste  
 Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom  
 As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ;  
 Her Spirit was the harmony of truth."

These incidents of a poet's pilgrimage were innocent enough in intention ; only one of them injured Shelley his conduct to Harriet was inexcusable. He could not see this, and the reason is plain. He was faced with a not uncommon problem which he thought he fully understood ; but he had overlooked one element in it : those " functions of sense " of which he had spoken in *Alastor*, but whose vital consequences he did not stay to observe. Imaginative man lives in two worlds, and so did Shelley, but he persistently undervalued and put out of his mind the one which he shared with his fellow-mortals. Laws were part of it, and he hated laws. He did not perceive that there are natural as well as conventional obligations, and that, if a man is to have peace, he must at least make and obey his own rules. The result was not freedom,

" But less of peace in Shelley's mind,  
 Than calm in waters seem "

The third thread is Shelley's philosophy of human life. This is based, not upon Science, but upon Faith.

Creation he would, of course, reject, as resting upon the mere authority of a class of men whom he despised and detested. No chemical, physical, or biological theory could interest him, because origin does not explain result or offer an escape from it. His starting-point is a passionate, unreasoned belief in man's nature. This he conceives as springing from the universal spirit of love and seeking only beauty ; but it is distracted and distorted by the difficulties and iniquities of mortal life. These result from a curse laid upon us at birth, when we enter an existence which conceals reality from us .

“ Death is a veil which those who live call life ,  
They sleep and it is lifted ”

The same deliverance, he holds, may be accomplished by the overthrow of tyranny and convention :

“ The painted veil, by those who were, called life,  
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,  
All men believed and hoped, is torn aside ;  
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself ; just, gentle, wise . but man  
Passionless , no, yet free from guilt or pain,  
Which were, for his will made or suffered them.  
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,  
From chance, and death, and mutability,  
The clogs of that which else might oversoar  
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,  
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane ”

Shelley's belief about death is finally expressed in a passage of unsurpassed poetical splendour—the last

seventeen stanzas of *Adonais*—and must there be read entire ; but the passage just quoted from *Prometheus* is even more suggestive because it seems to contain a further implication, one found also in the last stanzas of *The Sensitive Plant* :

“ That garden sweet, that lady fair,  
And all sweet shapes and odours there,  
In truth have never passed away  
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed , not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,  
There is no death nor change their might  
Exceeds our organs, which endure  
No light, being themselves obscure ”

In other passages Shelley seems to speak of eternity as an endless time-series ; but the image of the veil lifted by death or by some deliverance in life, even of the whole human race, would appear to be a recognition of the eternal as the equivalent of reality—a state in which we exist or have the power of existing even here, in a world ordinarily perceived under the form of Time ~~No other poet has come so near to a vision so capable of transforming human life.~~

### III. COLERIDGE

COLERIDGE was among the most modest of singers : he neither proclaimed the immortality of his own verse, like the Elizabethans, nor longed, like Keats, to be on Apollo's roll, in “ the count of mighty poets.” He hardly even hoped to be paid for his work. “ I expect,” he said in his little Preface of 1803, “ neither profit nor  
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general fame by my writings ; and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its own ' exceeding great reward ' " When he wrote these words his best work was already accomplished, and his reputation as secure as it is to-day *Christabel*, *Kubla Khan*, *Love*, and *The Ancient Mariner* had all been written, and the two last had been published with assured success ; but the full extent and significance of this success he seems never to have realized or dwelt on with satisfaction. When *Christabel* appeared in 1816 he did not remember that Scott had seen it in manuscript, and had drawn his own metre from it : he was seriously anxious lest he himself might be thought to lack originality—in other words, to have imitated Scott, whose *Lays* had all been published in the years during which Coleridge's poem had been left, by his own indolence, lying unknown to the public. " For there is among us," he says, " a set of critics . . . who have no notion that there are such things as fountains in the world, small as well as great ; and who would therefore charitably derive every rill they behold flowing, from a perforation made in some other man's tank " He realized only this much, that he was fed from a source of his own ; he had no certainty that he was himself, no less than Scott, one of those " full-welling fountain-heads of change " which spring but rarely in any literature, and when they do rise, mark the boundary between one age and another. It is seldom that important and far-reaching influences can be seen at work so clearly as they are seen in the famous little volume of *Lyrical Ballads* published in 1798 by Wordsworth and Coleridge in co-operation.

The history of this book has been often written, by

different methods and from different points of view. Two typical accounts may be compared: that by Sir Edmund Gosse in the fourth volume of Garnett and Gosse's *English Literature*, and that by Professor Elton in his *Survey of English Literature*, 1780-1830. Sir Edmund speaks of the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* as "an event . . . of an importance in the history of English literature so momentous that all else appears insignificant by its side" Of its effect he says "Thus, in a little russet volume published at Bristol, and anonymously put forth by two struggling lads of extreme social obscurity, the old order of things literary was finally and completely changed The romantic school began, the classic school disappeared, in the autumn of 1798. It would be a great error, of course, to suppose that this revolution was patent to the world: . . . the little book passed as a collection of irregular and somewhat mediocre verse, written by two eccentric young men suspected of political disaffection. But the change was made, nevertheless, the marvellous verses were circulated, and everywhere they created disciples So stupendous was the importance of the verse written on the Quantocks in 1797 and 1798, that if Wordsworth and Coleridge had died at the close of the latter year, we should indeed have lost a great deal of valuable poetry, especially of Wordsworth's; but the direction taken by literature would scarcely have been modified in the slightest degree. The association of these intensely brilliant and inflammatory minds at what we call the psychological moment produced full blown and perfect the exquisite new flower of romantic poetry."

This is a sensitive and enthusiastic account, but it is a true one. Professor Elton takes all this for said, or

felt, and devotes many pages of brilliant analysis to examining the process by which the psychological moment had been reached. Reading him we feel that the old phrases "Romantic and Classical," "the final victory of Romance," "the Romantic Revival," need a good deal of explanation if they are to continue in use. Down to the present moment nothing has yet happened to invalidate the belief that English poetry will continue to unite romantic and classical elements. Changes of taste, of view, of philosophy, do not necessarily involve the discovery of an absolute principle in poetry, nor, fortunately, does freshness or originality depend upon such discovery. The truth is now perceived that our poets have for centuries possessed good poetic principles and used good methods; when they have failed to maintain their great tradition it has been because they lost sight of the chase, or lacked the strength to keep up with it, for life runs swiftly and with swift changes of direction, and it is life which poetry pursues. Every poet knows that the central problem here is the question of poetic diction. What is, or rather what is not, poetic diction? These two, endeavouring to work their way out of the frigid and abstract style of eighteenth-century verse, and having before them the simple, life-like language of Cowper and Burns (with whom, as has been said, "the reserve and quietism of the eighteenth century broke up"), carried their experiment further in *Lyrical Ballads*, and Wordsworth put the new theory into words. "But his first impulse in doing so was hardly so much a revolt against Pope's *Iliad*, Macpherson's *Ossian*, and Gray's *Sonnet to West* (to which he is unjust), as a desire to find a suitable language for the new territory of human life which he was conquering, or regaining, for poetic

treatment. This was the life of humble but not ignoble men and women, with their tragic or pathetic fates . . . the poetry of the earth and its less articulate inhabitants, men, women, and children, and also beasts and birds . . . and since he felt that life, and indeed mind, was everywhere . . . he felt he had, not a mere territory, but a whole world, to recover for poetry . . . What language, then, was he to use? " This is the question which in all generations must present itself to all sincere poets—as a difficulty, if not as a conscious problem—and it is the honourable justification of all sincere experiments

Coleridge's share in this great venture was an interesting one. He had made Wordsworth's acquaintance in the summer of 1797, when he himself was living at Nether Stowey, and William and Dorothy Wordsworth were about to come to Alfoxden, two or three miles away. The reading of the first fragment of the *Excursion*, and the stimulus of Dorothy's conversation, drew Coleridge to their cause, and inspired him to the highest pitch of happiness and poetic power. He was eager to co-operate . . . but his gifts being in many ways distinct from any which Wordsworth possessed, he made his advance from a different side and into another part of the territory to be conquered. What Wordsworth was to attempt was to establish " the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature ", he was to present persons whom he had met and observed, and to present them as speaking the words, the sentences, and the sentiments which they used in daily life. In doing this he was, as we know, sometimes inconsistent and sometimes unsuccessful. Coleridge undertook what was for him an easier task: he was not only, like Wordsworth, a poet and a scholar,



he was also a metaphysician and a master of dreams ; he had the power of presenting not only a picture of the natural world and its inhabitants, but a picture or intuition of invisible worlds and beings, and an expression of the emotions resulting from this. Here he resembled Shakespeare ; and if he was to play any part in Wordsworth's scheme of bringing poetry nearer to life he must find the means, as Shakespeare did, of presenting Calibans, Ariels, Titamias, Pucks, Geraldines, Kubla Khans, Spectre Women, and Polar Spirits with such artistic truth that disbelief is willingly suspended, poetic faith is induced, and these airy nothings acquire reality in a new world. This he was in every way fitted to do ; he saw, as Professor Elton has excellently said, "(that just as the facts of life and daylight demand the artistry of reverie if they are to become truths inspired, so the realities of dream demand selection, and logic, and the rule of the waking brain, if they are to be more than tumbled and disordinate images. Hence the rigorous laws of beauty and structure that he tries to impose on his visions, especially in *The Ancient Mariner*. Hence, too, the wholeness and greatness of that poem, which leaves our mind satisfied, but still at work when it is ended.")

This is the terse summary of one truth, and the suggestion of several others. It is an antidote to one of our modern heresies, that which derides form and tradition, which holds art to be the offspring of ignorance and self-will, and defines genius as an infinite incapacity for taking pains. Coleridge's theory and practice were of the opposite kind, and both are worthy of the closest study. His practical success is not only remarkable in itself, but doubly so if we consider the circumstances of

the poet's life, most of which tended to weakness and distraction. Born in a remote Devonshire parsonage, one of an immense family, he could never look for substantial help from relatives ; his education at school and college was interrupted by poverty, and by an illness which taught him to rely on opium as a relief from recurring pain , an early and improvident marriage reduced him to dependence on patrons and friends , from time to time his mind was disturbed by changes of religious belief. It was impossible that such adverse influences should not affect his poetry ; they did actually make it fitful and incomplete, but in quality it remains among the greatest which we possess. It was, in fact, the man that was injured, and that part of his work which was dependent on his individual humanity ; his genius—that is, his power of drawing on sources deeper than himself—created divinely so long as it created at all . even such a fragment as *Kubla Khan* is a thing perfect in itself, a new-made world.

Our understanding of this is largely due to Coleridge himself ; his theory of the nature of poetry not only influenced Wordsworth, but has continued to gain adherents to this day. Keats says in one of his letters that “ what the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth, whether it existed before or not.” Shelley was as unlike Keats as it is possible for one poet to be unlike another, but he agrees here, for he constantly strove to embody his ideas in

“ Forms more real than living man,  
Nurslings of immortality ”

. In short, the overflow of the fountain of Romance was the destruction of the old and deadly doctrine,

planted (whether by intention or accident) in the ancient world by Aristotle—the doctrine of art as the imitation of nature. It had been elaborated in modern times by the addition of the even more deadly “decorative” theory, and thus authoritatively stated by Dryden: “The poet dresses Truth and adorns Nature, but does not alter them.” Coleridge, for whom the poet’s imagination is an echo of “the Primary Imagination,” and its activity “a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM,” gave the true reply to Dryden in his ode on *Dejection* (originally addressed to Wordsworth) in the two strophes beginning .

“ O Lady ! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does nature live , ”

and ending with the discovery of Joy as the creative power :

“ We in ourselves rejoice,  
And thence flows all that charms or ear or sight,  
All melodies the echoes of that voice,  
All colours a suffusion from that light ”

This, it will be seen, is no longer a theory of poetry, a metaphysic, a philosophy ; it is something more like a religion, a searching into the relation of man’s life to the universe. And that, as we have been lately reminded, is the true meaning of the Romantic revival. If Wordsworth and Coleridge occupied themselves with questions of poetic method it was because they knew that form and diction are no outward or mechanical matters, but the very way in which the spirit moves upon the surface of the waters, transforming chaos and creating life. A whole creed, a whole vision of the world,

is implied in this Man is no longer a weak and lonely being, the trembling dependent of blind forces or of just but indifferent gods ; he lives by admiration, hope, and love, by his own joy he creates his own world, and " all God's world is but the thought of man." What by itself was only " nature's clouded plan " becomes " the great Nature that exists in works of mighty poets," a world not unreal or mortal (because real only with the reality of chemical elements or physical forces), but real because it exists by the communion of all life, and undying because based on " thought and its eternity." The so-called Classical Age, by a century of conventionality, materialism, and the worship of " safety first," had brought Europe to war, revolution, and despairing restlessness, its poets, with their dull or witty couplets, had proved unequal to their opportunity : " With a puling infant's force, They sway'd about upon a rocking-horse, And thought it Pegasus." The new poets went a-riding too, and, like their predecessors, they rode after what they took to be the necessary errands of life. But since they had discovered that life itself was the errand, they laid stress upon their horse being alive, and winged That was one with their intent to ride with hope and joy, and to love all things both great and small. Coleridge lost his joy, and ended by falling behind the rest : but it can never be forgotten that at the start he led them all.

## IV. ALICE MEYNELL

In an age which has too often failed to distinguish between originality and crude haste, between freedom and mere sloppiness, it would be impossible to overestimate the value of Mrs Meynell's Essays to the general public. For these small studies of things apparently small, with their Athenian ingenuity, their Spartan terseness, their mediæval clearness and profundity, were, at their first appearance, read and marked, not by a narrow circle of the initiated, but by a crowd which looked eagerly for them week by week in the pages of an evening paper. Their influence was mainly by example, but sometimes also by precept, though even then the dose is concealed with a perfectly maternal skill. The essay on *Symmetry and Incident* is ostensibly a contrast of Greek with Japanese Art. The two opposed principles are traced in music, in domestic architecture, in the plastic arts, and into the argument is dropped a single unnoticeable sentence of six words, "The poets have sought irregular metres." It is not until seven delightful pages have won the reader to a general surrender that this point is again attacked and carried by the aid of a quotation from Coventry Patmore. "As all the music of verse arises, not from infraction, but from inflection, of the law of the set metre, so the greatest poets have been those the *modulus* of whose verse has been most variously and delicately inflected, in correspondence with feelings and passions which are the inflection of moral law in their theme. Law puts a strain upon feeling, and feeling responds with a strain upon law." This has all the appearance

of a conciliatory formula ; but there are some of us who would have wished before accepting it to hear who sets " the set metre," and how Patmore would apply his rule to the case of Walt Whitman , and now it is too late to hope for another essay from Mrs Meynell, an essay, perhaps, on " Law and Life," illustrated from the works of our neo-Georgian poets Their art she would probably have classed with the " nimble " and " unessential " art of Japan, as having " an obvious life, and a less obvious law." " But with Greece," she has said, " abides the obvious law and the less obvious life . . . and this seems to be the nobler and more perdurable relation " Whether that be universally true or not, at any rate it is pure academic doctrine, and all of a piece with Mrs Meynell's avowed preference for words of classical derivation, from the use of which she hoped for a certain spiritualizing and subtilizing effect. A reaction towards the side of the Latin element in the English language is, she once urged, " in some sort an ethical need for our day. We want to quell the exaggerated decision of monosyllables." Since the words were written we have seen a counter-reaction ; but it is not impossible that we are now once more upon the eve of a Latin period At any rate, the preference is an academic preference, and it has, like the love of a Greek symmetry, been exemplified by Mrs. Meynell herself in a noble and perdurable art

But that art, though it has a great ancestry and has inherited much of the clear-cut classical beauty, has other qualities too which are not less sympathetic ; qualities which are modern, which are English, which are even, if I dare say so, Japanese. I remember Mr. Kohitsu, the Mikado's hereditary art expert, saying when

he was in England, that he found a headache in all our Academic pictures "Your painters," he said, "put their subject upon the canvas beautifully, but they go on to paint four more subjects in the four corners, and these distract my eyes." In Mrs Meynell's work, as in that of the painters of Japan, there is no such distraction. There may be nimbleness, but there is never the unessential. The subject is given, and it matters not how small or even how fragmentary the presentment may be, because the thing given is not dwarfed or limited by the presence of other things, for the moment at least irrelevant; it is given in mysterious clearness, with all the possibilities of its own universe about it, visible enough, but visible to no eyes that can be made to ache.

This to me is the most distinguishing characteristic of Mrs. Meynell's Essays, and the one for which I most admire them. Her literary criticism, for example, is a thing of isolated moments, but it is always ripe, and has always its own flavour; I delight in the gleanings of her stray grapes more than in all the vintage of the German school, who have made so great an industry out of the chemical treatment of literature. "Master Shallow has the Weltschmerz"—it is, I think, in the essay on *Pathos* that she mocks so pleasantly at the critic of "importunate sensibility," who must squeeze pathos out of Shakespeare's lightest laughter. How different is her own method—how a half-page of hers on *Mercutio*, on *Ophelia*, on *Tom-a-Bedlam*, flashes upon the mind's retina an aspect that remains with us in the succeeding darkness, and leaves us moreover with the desire, and almost with the power, to call up other images in a like brilliancy. How lightly, again, she throws in at

the very end of an essay (on the *Spirit of Place*) a sudden memory of Milton's *Curfew*, "that sways across one of the greatest of all the seashores of poetry—'the wide-watered.'" How swift and deadly is her attack on Macaulay and his like for their unchivalrous treatment of Dr Johnson's wife, and yet when the half-dozen pages are done how utterly their meanness has perished—even their victim has faded away, and the light glows only upon the figure of the great and solitary man who had loved her. And how delicately, in a more mischievous mood, can she administer a back-hand stroke to Stevenson in his self-named part of the "Sedulous Ape." In the essay on *The Seventeenth Century*, she had noted in a phrase of Mrs. Lucy Hutchinson's, a "Stevenson-like character—a kind of gesture of language." Long afterwards a letter of Stevenson's was published, which showed that he had read Mrs. Hutchinson and disliked her. Mrs. Meynell's footnote records this, and adds, "He was young at that time of writing, and perhaps hardly aware of the lesson in English he had taken from her. We know that he never wasted the opportunity for such a lesson, and the fact . . . is established—it is not too bold to say so—by my recognition of his style in her own." The figure of Louis Stevenson is one of the best loved in literature, but a being so human could never be beyond the reach of humour, and here we see him caught in a ridiculous attitude long outgrown, as we have often seen ourselves in the forgotten photographs of our youth.

It is not only persons, real or imaginary, that spangle those essays with diamond points; ideas are scattered still more abundantly throughout them, and in the



same way glitter for a moment only but with permanent effect. No matter what the subject—*Ari, Letters, Winds and Waters, Wayfaring, the Colour of Life, or the Rhythm of Life*, Mrs. Meynell never thinks of being exhaustive, never fails of being suggestive. Of all her thoughts the most beautiful are those on children and on the sense of Time, and when, as in the last three essays of her book, she thinks of both together, then she stirs in us most surely the feeling of the smallness and the significance of human life.

Mrs. Meynell's poems, too, are terse, significant, and symmetrical, but they, too, are not remarkable for Greek feeling or for Latin language—they are not so much of classical descent as of English. Their form is their own—the natural expression of their very modern intuitions—but they have a trait or two that would seem to be inherited from kindred in the past, notably a union of wit and religious emotion, as rare now as it was characteristic of the seventeenth century in England. The contemporaries of Herbert and of Vaughan would have revelled in her use of images; for with her an image is neither a mere metaphor—another way of saying the same thing—nor a simile—a little separate picture introduced to adorn a narrative—but a real transposition by which the very key of a song is changed and the melody gains a quality which the simple major could not give. Mrs. Meynell's transposition is always complete—in her work an image is not a conceit, a resemblance to be suddenly shown and tossed aside again; it is something essential, an aspect to be followed throughout, almost always giving more insight than it promised, and often becoming the very substance of the poem. A very old and familiar image—that of

the sea-tide—has in this way filled two poems, one with its flow, the other—the more beautiful—with its ebb.

“ So in the tide of life that carries me  
From where thy true heart dwells,  
Waves of my thoughts and memories turn to thee  
With lessening farewells ,

Waving of hands ; dreams, when the day forgets ,  
A care half lost in cares ,  
The saddest of my verses , dim regrets ;  
Thy name among my prayers.”

There is a very unusual honesty in the confession of those lessening farewells ; they are like the startling franknesses of Donne, they give a new psychological situation where an old one might have been expected. Mrs. Meynell's genius is sundered by leagues of tenderness and self-restraint from that of the fierce and gloomy Dean, but she seems to me to resemble him in just this originality of metaphysical drama. Certainly there is no modern poem more original than the *Letter from a Girl to her Own Old Age*, none since Donne which looks more profoundly or more sadly into the abysmal deeps of personality. It is the longest poem in the book, but every fragment of it is significant

“ Listen, and when thy hand this paper presses,  
O time-worn woman, think of her who blesses  
What thy thin fingers touch, with her caresses.

. . . . .

I have not writ this letter of divining  
To make a glory of thy silent pining,  
A triumph of thy mute and strange declining

Only one youth, and the bright life was shrouded.  
 Only one morning, and the day was clouded.  
 And one old age with all regrets is crowded

Pardon the girl such strange desires beset her.  
 Poor woman, lay aside the mournful letter  
 That breaks thy heart the one who wrote, forget her :

The one who now thy faded features guesses,  
 With filial fingers thy gray hair caresses,  
 With morning tears thy mournful twilight blesses "

This is high poetry, and yet, as Mrs Meynell has herself told us, there is a higher—" Plain, behind oracles, it is ; and past All symbols, simple ; perfect, heavenly-wild " In her own poem called *Renouncement* there is this higher quality—the plainness and simplicity of a common experience, the heavenly wildness of the common passion that breaks all fetters made by men for each other. I cannot foresee the generation which that poem will not delight.

## V SHAKESPEARE'S "ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA "

To praise Shakespeare it is only necessary to take up any of the authentic plays and read it, but to praise him worthily it is necessary to be strict with him and with ourselves Indiscriminate adulation has not only dishonoured many of his admirers, it has concealed and debased Shakespeare himself as the fine lines of wood-work are concealed and debased by layers of paint. As to the play to be selected there will be many opinions.

If I choose *Antony and Cleopatra* it is not because I find in it any character wholly sympathetic or admirable, but because in that play and in its persons I feel Shakespeare moving with most perfect mastery. In setting forth the story of a Hamlet, an Imogen, a Desdemona, or the life of some generation of historic England, he is certain of conquering us, because he has at least one point at which his force is overwhelming, his weapon heart-piercing, but in the alien life of the Imperial vices he must win at every turn or fail to carry us.

The difficulties appear to be immense. The story is a great story, with all the prestige of ancient Rome and of the gorgeous East, with the whole known world for its stage, and the masters of the world for its *dramatis personæ*. Their qualities, good and bad, are such as can be judged by any one who has watched human nature, yet they are on a scale beyond our experience, and must be shown not merely with clearness and intensity but with the element of greatness added. To add this element of greatness, not only to one character, but to every character of importance in the play, and yet to keep the voices true throughout, would be hard for any writer, and perhaps especially hard, one might think, for Shakespeare. He was writing for a generation which loved poetry, eloquence, and sententiousness—loved even conceits, florid metaphors, and bombast. We cannot for a moment imagine that a great artist could have been tempted to use these as aids external to his own intuition, mechanical tricks to heighten an effect. But to a certain extent he shared the tastes of his generation, and the question for us is this: how far, in a play where greatness of manner was demanded of him by his subject, did he preserve a tone which was

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not only true to the ear of his own age, but remains true for us too, and therefore probably for all time ?

I believe that the more attentively *Antony and Cleopatra* is read, the better it will be found to bring Shakespeare through this severe test. It is a long play, but I have found not more than a dozen places in it where a phrase disturbs the attention as being irrelevant to the matter or inconsistent with the tone given throughout to the character speaking. Antony once mixes three metaphors :

“ The hearts  
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave  
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets  
On blossoming Cæsar, and this pine is bark'd,  
That overtopp'd them all ”

But in a speech which is a torrent of energy this is hardly unnatural. Twice he is surprisingly elegant. “ he wears the rose of youth upon him ” is an odd poetical phrase in a challenge, and odder still from a bluff general to his troops is

“ This morning, like the spirit of a youth  
That means to be of note, begins betimes.”

The same inconsistency appears in the scene where Octavia weeps and Antony remarks—to Cæsar too !— “ The April's in her eyes . . . ” ending much more characteristically with an abrupt “ Be cheerful.” Compared with the perfectly apt image of the “ swan's down-feather ” which follows it, this “ April ” shows as a mere conceit.

But these are small cavils : if a serious charge were brought against the play it would be upon the use of magniloquence or bombast. It is undeniable that

Antony, with all his splendid vitality and directness, is in several places irrelevantly given to words. When he exclaims in the supreme height of his impatience :

“ Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch  
Of the rang’d empire fall ! Here is my space,”

he clogs the first phrase with the second and delays the flood of his anger. When he bids Eros unarm him, it is right enough that he should speak of the sevenfold shield of Ajax, and cry, “ Bruised pieces, go ! ” but “ O ! cleave, my sides , Heart, once be stronger than thy continent, Crack thy frail case ! ” is unhappily thrust between. In each of these instances, as in others, an easy proof of the irrelevancy of the phrases complained of, is to read the passage as it would stand without them. It will, I think, be found to gain much by the omission

Four cases would, if I am right, be proved against Cleopatra ; at the end of Act III. it is difficult not to be thrown off by the forced image of the poison’d hail to be engendered in her heart and then dropped in her neck. The other three flaws all occur in the magnificent Scene xiii. of Act IV. When her dying lord is carried in, Cleopatra’s natural cry :

O Antony,  
“ Antony, Antony ! Help, Charmian ! ”

is unfortunately preceded by two lines of gigantesque apostrophe to the sun. Twenty lines later her very telling cry of distress at being too weak to lift the dying man is interrupted by the sonorous bit of learning about Juno, Mercury, and Jove ; and in the next speech “ the false housewife Fortune ” is still more false and

unfortunate. To say this is to judge very strictly ; but how can any standard be too high for a scene of such supreme word-magic—a scene which contains Antony's speeches, " I am dying. Egypt, dying . . .," and " The miserable change now at my end . . .," and Cleopatra's

" We'll bury him ; and then what's brave, what's noble,  
Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,  
And make death proud to take us "

It is very noteworthy that from this point to the end the play is by any standard faultless. In Act V there is one rhetorical passage, but it is a description of Antony, elaborated by the indignant queen to confound Dolabella, and it is entirely successful. In all the rest the vital energy of Cleopatra, which has burned so irresistibly through the whole play, blazes out until it reaches the last splendour of her " immortal longings," and her final " Peace, peace!" with the baby at her breast, " That sucks the nurse asleep."

The almost flawless truth of this play is then the measure of Shakespeare's power. The story is not in itself beautiful nor even pitiful. Antony and Cleopatra are not young lovers : they have both been faithless in their time, they are each in sudden moments faithless to the other, and worse still, they wrongly judge each other by themselves. He is profligate and weak ; she is cruel, vain, and full of guile. But they both have the quality which, for want of leisure to define it, I have called greatness : an elevation, an energy of the soul very rare among men, and to us very uplifting to contemplate.

This greatness of theirs Shakespeare has been able

to express for us, because he himself possessed it : by the mere outbreathing of it he created them.

## VI SOME DEVOTIONAL POETS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

THE inferiority of most religious verse is not difficult to explain : it is due to the introduction of extraneous matter into the works of art. In poetry, as in painting, the creative imagination takes its material from this world, the world of Time, and recreates it by a process not only of construction but of transfiguration : we see our own life, but we see it made new for us, and glowing under a light which transcends the beauty of the actual world and has an imperishable quality elsewhere unknown. But when the creative emotion which drives the artist to write or paint happens to be a religious one, he too often falls into the mistake of advocating or illustrating—that is, of adding something which is not his own : he includes in the fabric of his new world a number of details or dogmas which are unsuitable material for any artistic purpose, either because they are argumentative or abstract, or historical or theoretical, or because they belong to a life of which we have at present no familiar or generally accepted knowledge. But if he will avoid this natural temptation it is possible for a painter to paint a good picture on a religious subject—he has only to show us the divine on earth and not in the sky—and it will even be possible for a poet to make good religious poetry : he has only to rely on his own religious experience, that which comes to him from no outward source,



and yet is common to him and to an immense number of his human fellows.

Though this possibility is always with us, it has rarely brought us any but small and scattered gifts. We have had religious poems, but seldom devotional poets. From the seventeenth century alone have we received volumes of verse upon religious themes, so charged with sincere religious emotion as to be essentially independent of religious dogma. The six poets whose devotional work makes up my present subject are by no means all of the same rank, but they are all sincere, and though their allegiance was given to different schools of religious thought there is in their poetry little or nothing of a sectarian kind, in the controversial sense of the word. This common purity of temperament and the literary connection which exists between their work, makes it proper to consider them as a group, and even as a group characteristic of a particular century. We need not believe that human nature changes at every hundredth year and at no other time ; but we may and must recognize that both art and intellect have their clearly marked tides. The poetry, and especially the more serious poetry, produced between 1610, when Donne began to publish, and 1695, when Vaughan died, is clearly distinguished from the typical work of the Elizabethan age or of the eighteenth century. And this is exactly what we might expect, for the period was one of prolonged religious unrest. The social confusion, which had begun with the transition from the Roman to the Anglican system, was renewed by the schemes of the Stuarts and their supporters, and only ended by the bloodless violence of the Revolution of 1688. During these troubles an Englishman, on whatever side he

might be, had to pay dearly for his faith : and the poets suffered at least as much as others. Yet only one of any stature mingled partisanship with his poetry : and we are relieved from the task of considering this one exception by the obvious fact that Milton, though in his own way intensely religious, does not fall within our proposed group—he is not the author of a body of devotional poetry.

The first poet in my list, John Donne, was by birth an Elizabethan and a Roman Catholic : that is to say, he was born in 1573 and his parents had lived through the clash of Reformation and Counter-Reformation without accepting the national decision. Their son was entered at Hart Hall, Oxford, in 1584, and at Lincoln's Inn in 1590. But either his spirit or his social opportunities soon led him away from a professional career. In 1595 he sailed with Essex in the expedition against Cadiz : in 1597 he made " the Islands Voyage " under the same commander. Then he became Secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, the Lord Keeper, afterwards Lord Chancellor, and presumed so far as not only to fall in love with the great man's niece, Anne More, but to marry her clandestinely. For this crime, when discovered, he was imprisoned in the Fleet at the instance of his father-in-law, Sir George More, and upon his release he lived a precarious life in the employ of different masters, the last of whom was Dr. Morton, afterwards Bishop of Durham, and in the meantime engaged in controversy with the Roman Catholics. Donne's assistance was so much to his liking that he offered him immediate preferment if he would enter the Church of England. Donne refused, but only four years later he had gone far enough to publish a pasquinade against the

Jesuits. Finally in 1614, after more patrons had disappointed him, he was practically commanded by James the First to take Anglican Orders. He was ordained in January 1615, and only six years afterwards was appointed Dean of St Paul's, where he proved himself to be the greatest preacher as well as the greatest poet of his time. He lost his wife in 1617, and died himself in 1631.

George Herbert, who is sometimes said to have "followed" Donne, certainly resembles him in one particular quality—the so-called "metaphysical" quality of his poetry. Both may be said to have smelted the stone of the street for the gold of the Spirit: they sought Reality by realism. But their aims and methods were not the same. Donne spent his gigantic strength in trying to find that which seems to lie beyond discovery, to express that which was never yet expressed. Herbert, with a less chaotic experience, and less strength of every kind, came nearer to success within his own chosen limits. His aim is not so much to discover, as to exhibit in new ways what he has long known. He has no need to invent a new kind of verse, and his conceits are above all designed to be intelligible—they are examples chosen from familiar life but used with a dexterous twist which makes them attractive and memorable. But a greater difference lies beneath: the difference of natural temperament. Donne was a multiple man, self tortured and self torn. His violent repentance of his earlier loves and less divine poems was only one of many rebellions in his inner life. Herbert, though for a time he enjoyed Court favour and hesitated to take Orders, can never have suffered greatly—with perfect simplicity, perfect sincerity, and perfect fitness

for his own place in the world he needed only the joy of expression, and that he perceived to be attainable by the most unlaboured method.

“ How wide is all this long pretence !  
There is in Love a sweetness ready penned .  
Copy out only that, and save expence ”

Herbert's life, too, shows that he can hardly have been influenced by Donne's poems ; for most of them, and in particular the *Divine Poems*, were only published in 1633, when both poets were dead. Nor is there any record of friendship between them. Herbert was twenty years younger than Donne. he was at Cambridge, as undergraduate, fellow, and Public Orator, until after Donne had lost his wife and retired into the country, so that they cannot have met at Court ; and his last years were passed in the remote parsonage of Bemerton while Donne was practising a morbid and fantastic asceticism at St. Paul's

Donne died in 1631, Herbert in 1632. The posthumous poems of both appeared in 1633. There were then living two boys who eventually shared the Herbert inheritance between them, but spent it to far different purpose. Richard Crashaw, then aged twenty, and Henry Vaughan, aged twelve. Crashaw was the son of a Protestant theologian, who sent him to Charterhouse and to Pembroke College, Cambridge. Richard, however, migrated to Peterhouse in 1636, and remained there till 1641, when “ the troubles ” began, and Strafford was executed. In 1644, when Parliament signed the Covenant, Crashaw refused, and joined the King's party at Oxford. After the destruction of the Royalist army at Naseby in 1645 he left the country, and in the following

year was found in Paris by his friend Cowley and presented to the Queen. He was appointed a Canon of Loretto, having in the meantime read the works of St. Teresa and thereupon thrown himself into the arms of the Roman Church. It is probable that in that communion he found more appreciation than he would ever have gained from contemporary Anglicans; but that he was always sincere, from first to last the same ardent spirit, is clearly proved by at least two of his poems. One is the *Apology* for his *Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Saint Teresa*, "as having been writ when the Author was yet among the Protestants"; the other the exquisite little poem *On Mr. George Herbert's Book, entitled The Temple. Sent to a Gentlewoman*, in which he claims to be one with his Anglican master.

" Know you, Fair, on what you look ?  
 Divinest love is in this book . . .  
 And though Herbert's name do owe  
 These devotions · fairest, know  
 While I thus lay them on the shrine  
 Of your white hand, they are mine "

Unfortunately he had a taste in "conceits" which shows him—or one side of him—to be of a temperament wholly alien from Herbert's. It is useless to complain of a poet who is evidently himself; but when he has claimed to be made in the likeness of another, it is disappointing to find more caricature than resemblance. The Herbertian element is very marked in Crashaw's poem on *Saint Mary Magdalene, or The Weeper*: yet it uses images with such crude and puerile absurdity as to combine lack of reverence with lack of humour. When the Magdalen weeps for her Lord we are told:

“ And now where’er He stays  
 Among the Galilean mountains,  
 Or more unwelcome ways ;  
 He’s followed by two faithful fountains ;  
 Two walking baths, two weeping motions,  
 Portable and compendious oceans ”

It is incredible—this much we may say—that these lines, and many more of the same frigid and turgid sort, should have come from the man who wrote the Hymn of the Shepherds, *In the Holy Nativity of Our Lord God*, or the stanzas of the *Dies Iræ*, *Dies Illa*, which inspired the music of Blake’s most original lyric.

“ O that fire, before whose face  
 Heaven and Earth shall find no place,  
 O those eyes, whose angry light  
 Must be the day of that dread night.

Dear, remember in that day  
 Who was the cause Thou cam’st this way.  
 Thy sheep was stray’d , and Thou would’st be  
 Even lost Thyself in seeking me.

Shall all that labour, all that cost  
 Of love, and even that loss, be lost ?  
 And this loved soul, judged worth no less  
 Than all that way and weariness ? ”

There is a noble subtlety in this last stanza which is far above conceits. Otherwise the precise turn of thought would never have reappeared after nearly two and a half centuries in Cust’s ardently sincere poem *Non Nobis*.

“ May light and life and earth and sky be blasted,  
 But let not all that wealth of loss be wasted.  
 Let Hell afford  
 The pavement of her Heaven ! ”

Crashaw's poems were published in 1646, four years before Vaughan's. In the interim appeared the *Noble Numbers* of Robert Herrick, a volume of consummate verse differing in one most curious respect from all the religious poetry of that generation ; for it was the work of one who was at least as much devoted to the Pagan as to the Christian ideal of life. In the *Noble Numbers* we do not, it is true, see Herrick as the old Roman Epicurean idling delicately with his bevy of imaginary mistresses, and refusing for himself all the sensuous delights of earth. But the same qualities go to the making of the man in his devotions and in his more frequent Hesperidean moments. It has been wittily said that his marvellous charm is made up of the union of a classical ear and a modern eye : his style is an antique setting for the old English life which he knew in its homeliest country quarters. In the remote vicarage of Dean Prior, where he lived from 1629 to 1648, and again from 1662 to his death in 1674, he was at times intolerant of his rustic neighbours and their stagnant backwater of life ; but he mingled true touches of Devon with his fine Horatian measures. So doing he came near to George Herbert : the sudden strokes of realism breaking serious thought or stately expression into what is called " quaintness." A characteristic example is his *Thanksgiving to God, for his House*, wherein he gives thanks not only for house, chamber, safe sleep, harmless thoughts, and ministrations to the poor, but also for his dinner—

" The worts, the purslain, and the messe  
Of water-cresse  
Which of Thy kindnesse Thou hast sent ;  
And my content

Makes those, and my beloved beet,  
To be more sweet."

Charming as this simplicity is, it has hardly the convincing power of Herbert's: there is just too much art in it. But for music, and all that music gives, Herrick is unsurpassed. In the poem beginning "Night hath no wings to him that cannot sleep," even quaintness is used as no one else could use it.

"Sick is my heart! O Saviour, do Thou please  
To make my bed soft in my sicknesses.  
Lighten my candle, so that I beneath  
Sleep not for ever in the vaults of death"

Equal to this is Herrick's *Litany to the Holy Spirit*, and beyond it, *The White Island; or Place of the Blest*, whose very first stanza shows us a Herrick elsewhere unknown:

"In this world, the isle of dreams,  
While we sit by sorrow's streams,  
Tears and terrors are our themes  
Reciting,"

for we find him here far nearer to "Young Eternity,"

"In that whiter island, where  
Things are evermore sincere."

Henry Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans* appeared in 1650-51, two years after Herrick's poems. He too was a Royalist, and is thought to have served for a time in the King's army, after leaving Jesus College, Oxford. During two years of the Protectorate he retired to Brecon and practised medicine. It has long been the custom to compare him with Herbert, and to find him inferior, but this is an incomplete statement of his position. He



was, obviously and avowedly, a follower along a path already discovered and well trodden ; but no follower has ever made better use of his advantage. Herbert keeps a fairer level, both in wit and in simplicity , but Vaughan's successes are far beyond that level. *The Retreat, Peace, The Dawning, Man, They are all gone into the World of Light, Quickness, The Waterfall*,—these are poems which can never be displaced, nor outmatched even by Herbert's *Easter, Sinne, Prayer, Love, Constancie, The Pulley*, and *The Elixer*. The truth is that they are not imitations, any more than the gifts of a son are imitations of the father who begat him. And in this case if the father was the wittier and the more original, the son is beyond dispute the deeper mind.

Vaughan's mantle fell in turn upon another young Oxonian, Thomas Traherne of Brasenose College, afterwards Rector of Credenhill near Hereford, and finally Vicar of Teddington till his death in 1674. The greater part of his poems remained unpublished until some of them were discovered in 1903 by Mr. Bertram Dobell, and others in 1910 by Mr. H. T. Ball. They show a very close study of both Herbert and Vaughan, and a devotion to the latter which is interesting because it reveals an intellectual rather than a verbal or metrical discipleship. Traherne's metres are ineffective, and perhaps the worst is that used in *The Apostacy*, where Herbert's defects are carefully copied. But from Vaughan he learnt to brood on childhood and the child's vision of the world, into which he has descended from Eternity.

“ How like an angel came I down !  
How bright are all things here !  
When first among his works I did appear  
O how their glory did me crown !

The World resembled his Eternity  
In which my soul did walk ,  
And everything that I did see  
Did with me talk."

This poem (*Wonder*) and the similar one called *Christendom* are Traherne's best ; though in others he has some real felicities here and there, as in *Dumness*, where he speaks of Eternal Bliss :

" D'ye ask me what ? It was for to admire  
The Satisfaction of all Just Desire ; "

and in *Nature*, where he calls Infinity

" A secret Self I had enclos'd within  
That was not bounded by my cloaths or skin  
Or terminated with my Sight, whose Sphere  
Ran parallel with that of Heaven here."

But we feel as we read his pages that the tide is ebbing : Traherne's is a real wave but a small one, and it does not come near the shore-line of its forerunners. And the ebb is in no way to be regretted, for other tides will break upon other sands of Time. The value of the sixteenth-century devotional poets is not diminished by the certainty which we feel that we shall never again see their like. Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, and Traherne are none of them men of our time : we love their sincerity and the beauty of their voices, but we receive a part only of their devotional spirit, because they are speaking of religion, and religion is everywhere and under all forms a unique and individual relation—the ways to God are as many as the souls of men. The personal truth of these poets is that which remains with us : the

point of view of a past age can hardly be our own, but sincerity will always be the first necessity of poetry. Herrick too belongs to the past ; but his verse is imperishable. Time may destroy the content of a poem, but a perfect form is inexhaustible. What Herrick took from Ben Jonson and from Horace may yet be the freedom of many poets in many years. Of Donne we must give a different account : his form of expression has stood between him and many readers. But he is nevertheless a modern poet, a man of our own time and of times to come, and at his greatest he has a power of expression which can only be described by saying that it is the thoughts of the imagination of his heart made audible. To judge of the ardour, the weight, the swift subtlety of those thoughts we have only to read the *Holy Sonnets*, and in particular the Vth, VIth, and VIIth of them ; the Litany, and especially the XVth, XVIth, XXth, and XXIIIrd petitions of it ; and the three stanzas of the *Hymn to God the Father*. When there shall come another religious poet as great as Donne, he will speak like him : not because the content or the form of his verse will be like his, but because those to whom he speaks will forget the content and the form in the reality of the experience.

## VII. THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS

It has been roundly denied that the *Ingoldsby Legends* are literature. It would be interesting to know the exact moment at which the *advocatus diaboli* succeeded in turning the judges to this view. The verdict was

finally recorded in 1903, when two very capable critics—Dr Richard Garnett and Sir Edmund Gosse—published a weighty four-volume *Record of English Literature*, in which all authors worthy of the name were treated at a length proportioned to their value. The lowest in the scale was G. P. R. James, who received a notice some nine words long, but the *Ingoldsby Legends* and their author were left with Calverley and Locker Lampson among the still lower class whose names are never mentioned at all. Against this exclusion I protest. I do not hold a brief for Father Ingoldsby. To be candid, I am not prepared to claim a very high place for him: I shall not even plead his long reputation, his generations of friends, his geniality and common sense. He is a modest old fellow, but quite capable of standing on his own feet. his popularity will not stagger under a formal judgment, however weighty. My protest is a general one. I claim that the time is past for classical standards and exclusive judgments. When a writer has once enjoyed the consideration of reasonably qualified contemporaries, and has expressed or influenced their taste, he can no longer be dismissed as a pretender—he must be scientifically observed, described at least, and assigned his place, however obscure, in the line of development. “There are critics,” says Sir Edmund himself elsewhere, “who seem to know no other mode of nourishing a talent or a taste than that which is pursued by the cultivators of gigantic gooseberries. They do their best to nip off all other buds, that the juices of the tree of Fame may be concentrated on their favourite fruit. Such a plan may be convenient for the purposes of malevolence, and in earlier times our general ignorance of the principles of growth might well excuse it. But

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it is surely time that we should recognize only two criteria of literary judgment —Does the work before us, or the author, perform what he sets out to perform with a distinguished skill in the direction in which his powers are exercised? If yes, where in the vast and ever-shifting scheme of literary evolution does he take his place, and in what relation does he stand, not to those who are least like him, but to those who are of his own kith and kin? ” Reassured by this sound and modern doctrine, we can return cheerfully to the study of our old favourites. Certainly no friend of Father Ingoldsby will fear to test him by such criteria, for whatever he may himself turn out to be, his “ kith and kin ” are people to whom no critic will ever refuse the honours of literature

Richard Harris Barham, the author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, was born in 1788 of a good middle-class family, inherited a small Kentish estate at the age of seven, received a classical education at St. Paul’s School and Brasenose College, Oxford, was ordained in due course, and during some thirty-five years filled a succession of minor clerical posts with “ an enviable combination of tact, benevolence, and good humour ” The literary work to which he owed his wide popularity, and by which alone his memory still lives, lay entirely outside his professional career ; but although to his contemporaries, and probably to himself, it appeared to be an accidental by-product, it was, in fact, his most authentic offspring, bone of his bone, and full of the vital quality which explains his success and his survival.

The essential part of Barham was his “ unflagging spirit of fun.” It was this which led him into the

society of Hook, Cannon, Charles Mathews, and Sydney Smith, and made him a congenial member of that brotherhood of "diners-out." He made even worse jokes than his friends, and never equalled their reputation for table wit ; but in humour he was stronger than most of them, and he had the power, which they lacked, of telling a long story even better than a short one. The result is that while they have left but a disembodied and rather shadowy fame to haunt posterity, Barham still sits and laughs with us in a very substantial form ; and this is fortunate, because no one has yet come after him who could exactly fill his easy-chair.

We are not of course destitute. There has never been wanting a succession of humorists duly qualified to serve the State in prose or verse. Since Barham's day a Praed, a Calverley, a Gilbert have been followed by a Seaman, a Couch, a Godley, a J. K. Stephen, a Graves (or Lucas), a Milne, a Herbert. Moreover, the modern wits may claim, without fear of contradiction from their own contemporaries, that they are, in point of intellect and method, greatly better than their literary forefathers. They choose their subject with care, concentrate on it deliberately, and observe a most fastidious standard of execution. They disdain puns, farcical rhymes, and irrelevant allusions ; their temper is as faultless as their metre ; they succeed in being at once pungent and passionless. They move us—it is their object to move us—not to the unreflecting spontaneous laughter of boyhood, but to the deep approving chuckle of the mature in mind—a chuckle which seems to leave us not so much happier, as wiser, than we were. They are, in short, artists and critics rather than creators:

they contribute to the atmosphere but not to the population of the imaginary world.

Barham has little or nothing in common with these more refined and slender writers. When we look at him we see a different figure from a different age. Not from a primitive age—he is no Rabelais, no laughing Titan with the manners of the extremely early gods,—but he belongs to a time appreciably younger than our own, a generation more copious and less self-conscious, less careful of the boundary that marks off the craftsman from the amateur. He is not in the least concerned with criticism either of himself or any one else: his desire is to tell a story, and above all to tell it as amusingly as possible. He has no need to rack his brains for matter, or wait for the moment of sufficient impulse: he is always teeming, always impulsive. He writes as a child will shout when school is over—from sheer exuberance. His literary output is no task, but, as his friend Hughes said, “the occasional relief of a suppressed plethora of native fun.” However inferior in flavour, his best work may be placed, for pure light-heartedness, on the same shelf as Goldsmith’s *Haunch of Venison*.

It is this abounding fun which at once marks him off from our own generation and makes him so welcome when he returns to visit us. He is a *revenant* from the Age of Dickens: he has to the full its spirit, its naive facility, and its peculiar vision, with a fair share of its masculine creative force. His characters have not, of course, the intensity of those which haunt *The Old Curiosity Shop* or gather at the Ba—ath; but they are distinctly seen and vigorously drawn—they fill their little stage with movement and colour, they are well

grouped and posed, and their words are apt to jingle pleasantly in the memory. The most damaging thing which can be said of the pieces in which they appear is that the plot is never more than an anecdote, an unplaced fragment of life; and the author practically admits the charge by the playful inadequacy of the "moral" which he appends to many of his tales. But it must be said, on the other hand, that while the *Ingoldsby Legends* have very little obvious "meaning," they abound in "situations"—there is no question about the success of the dramatic point. A convincing proof of this is their aptness for the purpose of the illustrator. They offer at every turn, what no modern wit (except Gilbert) can possibly afford, a real opportunity for the power of an imaginative draughtsman; and it is significant that among the draughtsmen who have seized the opportunity, John Leech and Cruickshank themselves are numbered. This seems hardly to be due to a mere coincidence of date. Barham's scenes, however far inferior to those of Dickens, are really in the same *genre*. The figures in both are chosen not so much for their typical character as for a certain marked peculiarity. They are not found, like the persons in a modern novel, by scientific observation of ordinary life, but picked out deliberately, in obedience to a personal taste, for their extraordinary quality. This taste, this positive relish for the abnormal, for the comically or tragically queer, was as undoubtedly common to the two writers as the language in which they wrote; but the one either saw the quality, or created it, everywhere, while the other hunted it like a collector, and found it chiefly in libraries or in the notebooks of his friends. It was a further sign of weakness in Bar-



ham that, among the possible forms of the queer, his taste leaned rather decidedly towards the supernatural. Happily his mood was not often morbid. There is only one really unwholesome mystery in the *Legends*—the *Singular Passage in the Life of the late Henry Harris, D.D.*—and that we can the more easily neglect because, as Barham's son and biographer confesses, "it has indeed little in common with the productions with which it is at present associated."

Barham was a lover of the romance of history, a zealous student of what we often hear called "antiquities." On this side he was as far from the school of Dickens as he was nearly related to his contemporary Peacock. No one who knows the two books will miss the resemblance between *Maid Marian* and those of the *Legends* which deal with a mediæval subject. The two authors were in temperament very different. The epithets "whimsical and splenetic," which fitted Peacock like a pair of gloves, could not by any stretching be made to cover Barham's innocent and genial mood. But both loved strongly marked character, both revelled in a humorous situation; under the afflatus of pure gusto both became lyrical—Peacock more elegantly, Barham more uninterruptedly, lyrical. As for the Muse of History, both made her dance some false steps, but the will was not to blame; only their vivacity was now and then stronger than their sense of time. Their merit was that they knew the difference between a historical scene and a museum model; they made their heroes men first and mediæval afterwards. In this they were—though Barham never thought of it and Peacock would have denied it—on the side of Walter Scott against Queenhoo Hall and Wardour Street, and were

themselves doing not a little to discredit the always popular superstition that we are descended from jerkins and farthingales, stained-glass warriors and ladies carved in stone. If only for this, I wish them long life and reputation

THE END